

midnight magazine

1984

Vol. 1, No. 1

\$3.25





midnight marquee

CONTENTS

- Page 4 **CHARLES B. GRIFFITH INTERVIEWED: INSIDE HIS LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS** by Dennis Fischer In this no-holds-barred interview, the screenwriter of such films as *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*, *BUCKET OF BLOOD*, and *DEATH RACE 2000* vents his wrath about director Roger Corman!
- Page 10 **SOLAR SHREWS** by Dean Chambers By investigating female exploitation box office movies such as *GAT WOMEN OF THE MOON*, *FIRE MAIDENS FROM OUTER SPACE*, and *QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE*, Dean Chambers reveals aspects of Earthly human nature.
- Page 15 **WILLIAM OBIT INTERVIEWED: FROM LEOPARD MAN TO LEECH WOMAN** by Tom Weaver and Michael Brunas Why did Dean, a writer/director of 'B' horror movies, discuss the making of *CURSE OF THE UNDEAD*, *THE LEECH WOMAN*, *JUNGLE WOMAN*, and *SOUF OF A MONSTER*?
- Page 18 **ULTRA-GORE! SLICING OPEN "THE EVIL DEAD" AND "BASKET CASE"** by Gary J. Seebie A defense why the author feels that these two movies are among the best produced that far in the Eighties.
- Page 24 **FORDOTTER FACES OF FANTASTIC FILMS: BRANDON HURST AND GENE ROTH** by Jim Coughlin The latest installment showcasing fantasy film character actors who deserve more!
- Page 26 **THE MUSICAL BRAINSTORMS OF JAMES HONNER** by Jim Coughlin Four years ago James Honner was creating musical scores for exploitation hits, today his score big-budgeted genre productions. Why the rise to the top so rapidly?
- Page 29 **MIDNIGHT MARQUEE CINEMA REVIEW** by Gary J. Seebie
- Page 32 **MIDNIGHT MARQUEE BOOK REVIEW** by Gary J. Seebie
- Page 34 **GRAVE GROOMING** (letters from the readership)

MIDNIGHT MARQUEE #33, Fall 1984, is published every October by Gary J. Seebie at \$3.25 per copy (its third class mail). Editorial Offices: Gary Seebie, 41 Rockingham Court, Baltimore, MD 21234. Subscription/Black News Offices: Richard Seebie, 4000 Gannett Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21208. Please make all checks payable to Richard Seebie. Art and written contributions are encouraged, but writers/artists are asked to discuss ideas with the editor/publisher in advance. MidMar is available free in trade with any and all fanzines, for contributions, and for published letters of comment. The entire contents Copyright © 1984 by Gary J. Seebie. Printed in the U.S.A. Nothing may be reprinted without the editor/publisher's permission. Individual writers and artists assume responsibility for the originality of their work.

AD RATES: \$50.00 per quarter page. Classified Ads: 5 column lines or less cost \$12.50. We will insert your pre-printed advertising sheets in subscription orders for \$48.00. Our circulation with this issue approaches 3000 copies.

EDITOR, PUBLISHER, WRITER, LAYOUT: Gary J. Seebie

MANAGING EDITOR: Richard J. Seebie

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Dean Chambers, Jim Coughlin, Jim Coughlin, Dennis Fischer, Michael Brunas, and Tom Weaver

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS: Bill Nelson, Allen J. Kiszorek (pg. 4, 10, 15, 18, 26), David Daniels (pg. 33), Robert H. Kline (pg. 34), and Mark Robinson

FRONT COVER: Bill Nelson takes liberties by incorporating some of Rick Baker's discarded makeup concepts into his portrait of Michael Jackson from *THRILLER*.

INSIDE FRONT COVER: David Daniels softly renders a macabre/vampy family portrait from *GREMLINS*.

INSIDE BACK COVER: Mark Robinson captures the tortured countenance of William Hurt as he regresses into *ALTERED STATES*.

BACK COVER: Allen J. Kiszorek captures one of makeup artist Rick Baker's finest achievements, the transformation sequence from *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON*.

DEALERS: Inquire about bulk rates for MidMar!

MIDNIGHT MARQUEE NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION: Bud Plant, Inc. Grass Valley, California (phone: 916-272-9585); See-Data Distributors, Inc., Brooklyn, New York (phone: 212-766-1120); Funco Enterprises, Inc., Albany, New York (phone: 518-493-1420); Cleveland Distributors, Inc., Baltimore, Maryland (Phone: 301-295-1184); Capital City Distribution, Inc., Westwood (phone: 800-294-8887); and Longhorn Book Distributors, Inc., Dallas, Texas (phone: 214-424-8100). Order additional copies (or even back copies) of MidMar from the Distributor in your area!

PRINTED BY THE ARCADE PRESS, BALTIMORE, MD (phone: 301-428-1190). Special thanks to Bob Gehring and the crew!

SPECIAL CREDIT AND THANKS: My father, Richard J. Seebie, for overall assistance; Allen J. Kiszorek for his high-wire dedication, sacrifice, and friendship; The Wolf Company Advertising (special thanks to Ronna Greenberg and Connie A. Friedman); Ray Thompson & Associates Advertising (special thanks to Barbara Perl); Robert Kriger Advertising; Judy Clark; Kansas of 25th Century-Fox; Gary Hertz of New Line Cinema; Mr. Robert T. Marbanis; Jerry Chongard/Media Material Store, Inc.; Bill George; Dennis Fischer; Dean Chambers; Jim Coughlin; and Mrs. Joan Jewell.

DEDICATION: To my heart-throb, best friend, and now my wife - Susan - for understanding that my classes and love of horror movies, though existing long, it not as strong as my obsession and love for you!

Welcome to the 33rd issue of *MIDNIGHT MARQUEE*, celebrating our 21st year of publication. First of all, to everyone out there who supported *FANTASY FILM EXPO/FANEX 84*, I personally thank you. The horror/science fiction film convention, scheduled for August 17-18, 1984, at Baltimore's Hyatt Regency Hotel had to be cancelled for two very simple reasons. First, because of the over-abundance of people flying coast to coast during Olympic August, we were told by travel agencies that we had to book our guest's flights (transporting West Coast people here to Baltimore and back again) no later than late April. Our expenses would be in excess of \$5,000 which we didn't have in the kitty. Secondly, the response to our ads, especially from dealers, was pathetic. We needed to make a specific amount of money from selling Dealer's Tables in order to finance our other expenses. However, we only sold four or five tables meaning we had no working capital. The bottom line is that we needed a sponsor with big bucks that could front us the money we would probably later make back. When all this money had to come out of the pockets of two modestly-recovered couples, *FANEX 84* died. All of us involved are sorry. Maybe in another year or so *FANTASY FILM EXPO* might return. Keep watching the skies!

On a happier note, Sue and I were married June 30, 1984 (three months earlier than reported last issue!). The wedding itself was a fiasco - literally everything that could go wrong went wrong. We planned an outside garden wedding and it rained. We rented a small rental lodge at backup and discovered four hours before the wedding that the lodge did not have indoor plumbing. Instead, two out-houses were in back. The band cancelled the evening before the wedding. Sue and I, with some help from her relatives and grandfathers, made do the food (25 pounds of potato salad and 15 pounds of meatballs, among other things). We were fortunately able to rent the local funeral at the last moment for our reception (thus squeezing 70 plus people into her aunt and uncle's small kitchening/living room area for the ceremony itself) - the out-houses were out. But that meant that Sue and I three hours before the wedding, had to help decorate the hall, set up tables and chairs, drive up balloons, etc. During the wedding wedding dinner, the reserved target areas to prayers, confused our specially written wedding vows, dropped the ring, and forgot to tell the guests to kiss the bride. Sue and I both agreed that a quick visit to the county courthouse would have

(Editor's Remarks continued on Page 31)

CHARLES B. GRIFFITH INTERVIEWED: INSIDE HIS LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS! BY DENNIS FISCHER



ROGER K. BY

Modern day film criticism got its start in America in the Sixties about the time Andrew Sarris imported the auteur theory to these shores. For those unfamiliar with it, the auteur theory basically stated that film is a visual medium, and since the director is the one responsible for selecting the visuals and guiding the actors in their performances, then the director can be said to be "author" of the film, the main artist responsible for creating it. In the case of writers/directors like Kubrick, Kurosawa, Coppola and others, this view is in a large degree true. Some directors like Hitchcock and Hawks while they didn't write their screenplays, had a large impact on the shape and direction of the story in their films. Mainly the auteur theory concentrated on selecting common themes and stylistic nuances in any given director's work.

Unfortunately, this view of film ignores the fact that film is a collaborative art. The director is often limited to the conclusion of all others which is a distortion of how films are made and why they work. Since we will be discussing his work frequently we'll use for our example Roger Corman. Corman has depended on many craftsmen for what quality there is in his films. There is the beautiful photography of Floyd Crosby, the inventive art direction of Daniel Haller, and the wonderful performances by actors such as Kerfoot, Price, Lorne, and others.

In addition, Corman does not sculpt the screenplays of his films in the way a Hawks or a Hitchcock would. He depended on a stable of talented writers like Richard Matheson (HOUSE OF USTER, PIT AND THE PENDULUM, TALES OF TERROR, and THE RAVEN), Charles Beaumont (THE HAUNTED PALACE, MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH) and Robert Towne (LAST WOMAN ON EARTH, TOMB OF LIGEIA) who just wrote such highly regarded screenplays as SHAMPOO and CHRYSTLER.

Of all the writers who worked for Corman, the most unjustly neglected is Charles B. Griffith. While his contributions are often ignored when films such as NOT OF THIS EARTH or LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS are discussed. As a writer, Griffith's contributions were vital in making a number of these fondly remembered, off-beat films as enjoyable as they are. Before an actor sets key or a director visualizes a plot, the writer must breathe life into his creations in that most difficult of forms - the screenplay.

In getting these films made, Griffith has had a number of bitter experiences, not the least of which was having his story and characters from LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS made into a musical without his knowledge or consent. (Howard Ashman, who wrote and produced the musical remake, eventually with Roger Corman who claimed to own all rights. Since

then, there has been a settlement which will give Griffith credit on future productions of the play and the proposed Martin Scorsese film that is to be made from it.)

After fashioning entertaining scripts for films with low budgets and encountering endless hassles, Griffith has trouble working today because he has been classified a writer and director of nozzies. "They think of me as a crused, far-out writer, so I'm not taken seriously where I can get work."

This is a highly unfortunate view since often it was Griffith a contribution which made the films on which he has labored a bit more enjoyable and notable than they would otherwise have been. It is not Corman's direction that draws people to LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, it is the blackly humorous plot and outrageous comedy. Griffith's film GUNSLINGER was the first western to have a female monster. NOT OF THIS EARTH was an intelligent science fiction reworking of DRACULA. ROCK ALL NIGHT helped introduce the fabulous Patters. THE WILD ANGELS led to a series of "biker" movies and helped launch the careers of Peter Fonda and Bruce Dern. EAT MY DUST, which was written and directed by Charles Griffith was the top-grossing New World film for some time, beating out many studio hits such as films by Bergman, Kurosawa, and Fellini. Mosty, he will be remembered for the wild comedy of LITTLE SHOP, BUCKET OF BLOOD, and DEATHRACE 2000 which made wailing one of these "B" - movies an unexpectedly delightful occasion.

DF: Could you give us a little background about yourself?

CG: No one ever tells that. My roots were in show business. My mother was an actress, my father, when a young man, was in vaudeville. And my grandfather was a tightrope walker in the circus, so it apparently went on like that. It was automatic that I'd go into the business. I went to military school - nothing else really interesting ever happened to me. I got into the picture business because I did some scripts for my grandmother who was Myrl of "Myrl and Marge" - my mother having been Marge - and that was the original "soap opera" back in 1931.

DF: How did you start your association with Roger Corman?

CG: Well, I was out here with my grandmother writing TV scripts which were not made and trying to break in as a screenwriter. I wrote a lot of pictures. I think about seven screenplays - and Jonathan Haze was working with Roger and Dick Miller and Bobby Campbell and a lot of other people - they were all crazy schubs in the early Fifties - so Jonathan took all my scripts over to Roger. Roger called me and hired me to write a western, which I did and it

wasn't made, and then another western which wasn't made. The first one was THREE BRIGHT BANNERS, a Civil War western, and then Gorman taught me about budget. The third time was GUNSLINGER, and that one was made.

That was made in 1955, and it was supposed to be the last six day picture. But it got renewed out, so it took seven. It was shot in the rain around an old ghost town, and it came out gorgeous. One day he shot in that light. It didn't glow, though you had to have head light and hard reflections and everything. You had that English countryside look right out in Topeka Canyon.

DF: I understand your first science fiction script was IT CONQUERED THE WORLD which was credited to Lou Rusoff?

CG: Lou Rusoff had a brother dying in Canada and he needed money so he did the script which was very confusing. Roger gave it to me, and I had three days to rewrite it, so I started from scratch.

DF: I noticed you appeared in that film as a scientist.

CG: That's right. I was also the editor that died at the beginning of ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS. Beach Dickenson was steering that boat, and he swerved and I fell out of the boat. The boat went over me and the propeller hit me, and the sound man ran to rescue me, which got Roger mad because he ran into the shot. I also appeared in NOT OF THIS EARTH, LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, ATLAS, and played the drunken pool attendant who falls into the pool in HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD.

DF: Despite their cheap appearances, I noticed that the science fiction films you wrote in the Fifties were more intelligent than most of the others made at that period. Your films centered around some interesting ideas like depicting the horrors of mind control. NOT OF THIS EARTH used telepathology long before THE FLY. It seems like you worked hard to come up with something interesting.

CG: Oh more stories. Because the films were a bit rushed, working on them felt more like play than work. We were just dashing around. We don't feel any different than the people who were doing live television at the time. Nobody thought that anybody cared about any of those pictures when they played weeks later or months later because until now there never really was a built movement. I was thinking about it the other day when somebody asked me what the cult movies were when I was a kid and I said there weren't any. It was the silent era prior to that, and those pictures were just unavailable. They were inaccessible and nobody knew what they were, except the comedies. There are still books about them.

We didn't have anything to look back to, and the old studio pictures were not very accessible. GUNGA DIN and CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE and all those were favorites with the kids and stayed favorites, but there was no television, no revival theater for most old movies. Who could imagine that the garage from the Fifties, which was a big production area, would ever be seen again? Maybe if they had, we would have been able to take a little bit into and they would have been better.

DF: The last film of yours that I saw was NOT OF THIS EARTH.

CG: I had done GUNSLINGER and had pitched up IT CONQUERED THE WORLD - this was early '56 - and I went over to Roger's office which was the size of a dinette, and I said, "Don't you think it's time to do another science fiction?" And he said, "Okay, go ahead," and that was that.

DF: He didn't give you a lot to go on.

CG: Yeah. So I wrote NOT OF THIS EARTH and that started all the X-ray eye business. Most of Roger's themes got established right in the beginning. Whatever worked, he'd come and take again, and a lot of things got used over and over. Like in THE WILD ANGELS which started the whole motorcycle business in which was it, '57? He did two motorcycle pictures and then never again, and everybody else did thousands of them and they were all the same. And then EASY RIDER came in and added "the finger" and a few other gimmicks and then that was in all of them.

During the production of NOT OF THIS EARTH, I was married to a nurse at the time and she helped me do a lot of medical research. I remember we found cancer in that script. Somewhere the film was a mess when it was finished. She would never go to see any more of them. About the time we saw GUNSLINGER my wife was so shocked at the difference between the script and the picture that she never went to see another movie of mine.

DF: I found ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS rather interesting in that the aliens annihilate the humanity of the protagonists and use it against those that are left. How did the film come about?

CG: Roger came to me and said, "I want to make a picture called ATTACK OF THE GIANT CRAB" and I asked: does it have to be (about) atomic radiation? He responded "Yes." He said it was an experiment. "I want suspense or action in every scene. No kind of scene without suspense or action." His trick was in saying it was an experiment which it wasn't. It was just that he didn't want to bother cutting out the other scenes which he would do.

We didn't cut much in those days because the pictures always came in short. So that's what happened. There was always something going on in that picture. It was so dumb. I mean in the script Mel Welles says, "Strange, there's no sign of life on this island" and Roger cuts to seagulls taking off from the cliff. Caw, caw (British shocker!).

DF: Why did he do that?

CG: Oh atmosphere. He wasn't really listening to the dialogue.

DF: You don't like the silly idea of radiation making things big?

CG: It was called "grobly-grob" and was meant to sound internal. Did you know that Bill Haisler was under the crab prop? He later ended up starring in PEYTON PLACE. And Jack Nicholson may have been under a part of the same. Yeah, he was around the set sleeping in those days too.

DF: I remember his great bit in LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS.

CG: Yeah. Sometimes it's missing from the prints. Collectors steal it and keep it in their library.

DF: How did NOT OF THIS EARTH and ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS do?

CG: NOT OF THIS EARTH and ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS were on a double bill that made 400% profit the first week. They had a crab in the theater in L.A. It was made out of styrofoam and fiberglass around an aluminum frame, and it wouldn't sink. I had to shoot it underwater and there was no way to get it underwater. (It wasn't was 2nd Unit Director on CRAB MONSTERS.) We had iron and rocks and things on it, but there was no way. It flew up out of the water whatever we tried to get it to sink. The crab was 15 feet long and cost \$400.

The poster for IT CONQUERED THE WORLD was not much of a monster. When Beverly Gorman first saw it, she said, "This son-of-a-bitch couldn't conquer anything" gave it a good kick, and knocked it over. IN NOT OF THIS EARTH, Paul Birch was supposed to wear wrap-around glasses so you couldn't see the sides of his eyes. They stuck gaffer's tape on the sides of his glasses. You can see it if you look in that from I was in the scene at the newsstand on Las Palmas.

I had the world film with titles. I hated some of those titles they put on the films. I did one called TEENAGE DOLPHIN where every page of the script was rejected by the censors and I had to write it over again during the weekend. I once wrote a musical in 24 hours called ROCK ALL NIGHT. Lord Buckley was supposed to be in that. He was a friend of mine and I was to write material for him. Lord Buckley was a great character and he was supposed to play Sir Bob in that picture, but he was on the road somewhere so they got somebody else.

DF: After that was THE UNDEAD.

CG: One day Roger said, "I want you to do a Betsy Murphy picture" because BETSY MURPHY was being done at that time as a big budget picture, and the book was still relatively popular. (The book and film were about a woman, who when hypnotized remembered her past lives.) I thought it would be dead by the time we could get anything out. I wrote to the press called THE TRANCE OF DIANA LOVE. Carefully I separated all the different things with sequences with the dead which were really elaborate, and the dialogue in the past was all in Latin or perfume. Roger got very excited by that. He handed the script around for anybody to read and nobody understood the dialogue, so he told me to translate it into English. It was just really ruined, but it was a fun picture to shoot because I was done in ten days at the Sunset Stage, which was a supermarket on Sunset Boulevard. We filled it with palm trees and fog and it was the first time Roger had used any of that stuff. He didn't like to rent anything.

It was a lot of fun to make. You could see the script on the left side and all the gimmicks were very obvious and pretty. Roger deliberately played to suck row, a degenerate audience.

DF: I was surprised to see that you directed your first film in 1957.

CG: I started out as a director with FORD DODEN ISLAND. I was trying to

Here Peter Graves appears to be having much more difficulty than Buxley Garland had with the monstrous crab from IT CONQUERED THE WORLD.





Paul Brink as the space vampire tentacles Beverly Gaddis from **THIS EARTH**

sent money to make independent low budget pictures and wound up at Columbia with a live picture writer-producer-director contract. I made two pictures under it. I wrote and produced both of them, and directed one of them. [The other was **GHOST OF THE CHINA SEA** with David Brian and Jonathan Hest and was directed by Fred Sears.] They were really terrible and I wasn't ready to do all of that yet. It stopped me for 20 years from ever directing again. They were really crap. You see, I got chicken and started to write very safely within formula to please the major studios, and of course you can't do that!

DF: How did the idea of combining a monster movie and a gangster melodrama come about? I mean, that's a rather bizarre combination.
CG: You see, we had lost money that we would do. One of them was **NAKED PARADISE** which was made in 1958 about a robbery in a pineapple plantation in Hawaii where the hero is operating a small business and is lured by the crooks to take them to safety. After there's a robbery in Hawaii, the government shuts down the airports and exports and nobody can get out so that was the thing. The crooks hung around in this house waiting to be picked up while all the action happened and they all kill each other off.

That was successful so we did it again in South Dakota. Roger says, "I want **NAKED PARADISE** using a gold mine instead of a pineapple plantation. Put it in South Dakota and add a monster." I didn't know how to add a monster to that script, so I had it all wrapped up in a cocoon in Hawaii, the government threatening to break loose all the time. I didn't know how it happened. That became **BEAST FROM HAUNTED CAVE**.

And **CRATITUDE FROM THE HAUNTED SEA** was the same picture again, only this time instead of a pineapple plantation, it's the Cuban National Treasury and the same gang of crooks taking off this time only with an added zinnia because Roger wanted another comedy. He still didn't know they were going to flop - the comedies, so that was how that one happened. The monster was made by Beech Dickinson for 50 dollars with a fur coat, two ping-pong balls, and garden towels [for claws].

ATLAS was like that picture again. They weren't robbing anything, but the characters went through the same sequence of scenes.

CRATITUDE FROM THE HAUNTED SEA was the simplest of the comedies. Roger called me one morning about three o'clock in the morning, and he was shooting **THE LAST WOMAN ON EARTH** which Robert Towne wrote and acted in over Puerto Rico way. DF: I understood that Roger had Towne sitting in it because the script hadn't been finished when he was set to start, and he didn't want to pay for an extra plane ticket so he had the writer double as an actor.

CG: Yeah, sure. So he got me to write **CRATITUDE FROM THE HAUNTED SEA** in three days and I sent it down to him in pieces. I didn't get to read the first scenes to see what he had had gone on in them. I was definitely off the wall. He did shoot about half of it, maybe two-thirds of it and Roger wanted to play a character. So I wrote this character of Happy Jack Monahan for him to play - who commits suicide, falls in love with a whore, a crisis, and who had to do every possible emotion. So Roger had to hire an actor. He was enraged [Grinches chuckles].

The pictures didn't make any money because he was releasing them through his own Filmgroup Company, and he knew right away that comedy was not automatically an exploitation market. He tried it again with **THE RAVEN**.

DF: The Richard Matheson film?

CG: But that was the end of it though and he's never made any since. **EAT MY DUST** created a big light and he asked me to cut out all the jokes on that and I had to make up stuff on the spot while we were shooting, trying to make it funny.

DF: How much time did you have to write the screenplays for **BUCKET OF BLOOD** or **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**?
CG: Five days each. We did **BUCKET OF BLOOD** first, which was not meant to be a comedy according to Roger, but became one because of me. It was the same situation where these ads were going to stand for another week.



Wonder who is operating the crab now - (d) Nelson or Jack Nicholson? "I want suspense or action in every scene," demanded Coman from **ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS**

DF: The ones from **DIARY OF A HIGH SCHOOL BRIDE**?

CG: Yeah, you know the story. That had to be rushed through and that had to be a comedy. Roger asked me, "How do you shoot comedy?" and I told him. Shoot it like you would anything else. That was that - instead of having him trying to shoot comedy and be funny. Well, that worked and we got applause on the set during the reading of the bikini policy. That got Roger very excited. It was the first time anybody had ever liked anything so we had to do it again right away. We sat down during shooting and he insisted that I had to be the exact same picture scene for scene with just some of the scenes changed and so on. And I figured, oh well, I'll just go from scene to scene and he'll never know the difference.

DF: Did you know that **BUCKET OF BLOOD** is one of the few films that chronicles something of the bikini era?

CG: The bikini in the coffeehouse scenes was all my friends. I guess I didn't know too many of the girls, but everybody went to coffeehouses in those days. And the thing is those were the sets that were there to shoot. Roger said "Write a horror picture for those sets." There was a bikini coffeehouse - a jail - a funny pad with nothing in it and the lumberyard was the studio lumber department - so there really wasn't much of a choice. That's what dictated it being a comedy.

DF: And **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS** was actually shot in two days and three nights?

CG: Well, Roger shot the elements in two days on the stage - 50 pages a day - and I did the exteriors all around town which took four days and nights. We were in and out day after day into night. Mel Welles, who directed 2nd unit on **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS** helped out and that was the entire crew. Everybody else we got from ad hoc. We gave them 108 a shot to act in the picture. We got all kinds of good stuff. We got 15 minutes of picture for \$1100, which was not too bad. The whole picture cost \$37,000.

DF: I noticed you appeared in **LITTLE SHOP** as a hood-up man.

CG: I played four parts. The guy who runs out of the office with his assistant the gangster that sticks up the flower shop and gets eaten by the plant - a shadow on the wall, and the voice of the plant, which was supposed to have been killed but I did it on the stage. I did it on the stage so that Jack Jace would have something to play off and react to. We just left it in. Roger wanted to play that because to do it over would have been a little too much money and trouble, so it stayed.

All my relatives were in that picture. My father was the guy in the dentist's chair who got the mirror broken in his mouth. My kid brothers and sisters were in the crowd scenes. At that point Roger and I were getting along very well, and I got away with a lot. I got away with rehearsing the cast ahead of time. Roger wouldn't let you do that now. It would take too much time.

Now you can't change anything unless he orders it changed. You can't try anything. The director of **DEATHSPORT** came up to me and said he had a fabulous idea of shooting at night. I said, you'd better tell that to Roger. He had worked out how he could use filters to get day for night. Roger told him no night and no day for night. That was it. Anything you suggest to him he'd say no. Anything. Ask anybody who works for him now. He'd get people together and tell them that nobody in this company knows how to make a picture.

The talents that worked for Roger got their checks because they were willing to work for nothing. These days everything is stolen. The ideas are stolen, the money is stolen from the people doing the work, the residual benefits are stolen, the residuals are stolen, there's no pension or welfare, all of that is stolen, and then the final picture is stolen like the evidence because it's a piece of crap. That's low-budget exploitation picture making.

Getting back to **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**, I didn't even know I had been released. I'd moved to Los Angeles and moved to Rome after **ATLAS**, and I was there for a director of **Michael Reese** phoned from Montreal and said that he had to get off the phone because **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS** was on television and everybody in town was watching it. That was the first news I'd had that it was going to be a cult picture. By then I knew

there started to be such things as cult pictures

DF: I am curious about ATLAS as I've never seen it

CG: I'm lucky. I've got a print of ATLAS and it's probably blood red by now. ATLAS was a mess. It was a disaster project. I was out there doing an Israeli war picture about helicopter pilots who never got in Israel and Roger wanted to make ATLAS. This was after LITTLE SHOP and I wanted to make it as ATLAS THE GUIDED MUSCLE. But he wanted to make a Hercules/ Helen type thing. Roger had a deal in Puerto Rico so that it was going to be a jungle picture about Atlas and Zeus. Ancient Greece (sigh) how jungles, so why not?

We were going to use the post office (Paris) and the jungle but I was going to leave because of a picture that collapsed in the desert and I was supposed to make it in Israel. So Roger and I flew to New York together and we worked on the details of ATLAS and I landed a ship going to Israel. I made it to Naples and received a cable saying the company was bankrupt and good luck. So I was stranded for two years in Israel and Roger wouldn't send me the film to get out so I wound up doing some pictures over in Israel (HATASH-KANIM and FRONTIER AUCAZ).

Then Roger called me up from Athens and said he was going to do ATLAS there instead of Puerto Rico, but I had to rewrite the script completely. So I went to Athens and he paid me two hundred dollars to rewrite it and 50 dollars a week to be associate producer/production manager/ action director/ do first aid duty and everything else. He picked up a girl in a bar in Berlin named Barbara Cabreu and she did all the other work. She was a wardrobe script girl and made-up she had no experience at all. Women know how to do make-up. Roger says and anybody can do scriptwriting.

We used local talent from around the town near Athens, and the picture was written in a few days near Athens and it was terrible. Frank Wolf and a couple of other actors came over and they were very ridiculous. Roger was in a lowering rage throughout. There was a Greek cameraman and a Greek crew. Nobody knew left from right. The story couldn't match. They lost the rear guards of their paper-mache helmets so that their relatives could recognize them in the picture, so there was this paper hanging down from their helmets. The tips of their spears were hanging down because they were made out of rubber which I had to have done at a fire shop round the corner

Top: Jacobson, Haux, Meri Welles, and Jackie Joseph admire the plant from LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS when seen will demand, "Feed me!" Bottom: On-location shooting during the production of ATLAS showing modernistic houses in the background and wimp warriors in the foreground



of the sat one day. It was a lot of fun

We were shooting in public buildings. Of course they threw us out of all of them. The parents said we could shoot there, but not with actors. So I'd go to all the archeological sites and used the security forces and the police. There were always a few more around here lately on the script. We bribed the guards at the gate to let us in to shoot. Roger broke his sunglasses in half and had sweater lentisms. He went a little mad during that picture. We went off afterwards and got shipwrecked.

One night we were in Athens just before ATLAS started and we went out and met some jungs in blue shirts who were petting out tasters for free beer in one of those whorehouse night clubs and I was trying to tell Roger what it meant. He said, "Free beer. It says here she's free beer. So let's get a free beer!" So we got a free beer and were hustled immediately by these chicks with a glaring bouncer behind them and we went out and had another free beer until we came to this place that said it had a free house at 15 o'clock and 2 a.m.

Roger said: "Let's go back and see the film and go to a bar." We returned and there were these two hookers who came and sat with us. Aren't you going to buy us a drink honey? So Roger started buying them champagne, ordering all this champagne and he had this girl sitting on his lap making with her and I was just sitting watching all this. And there was still no door-show and he got mad, and the bar came and it was 500. He said "I'm not paying 500 for this and there's no free house!" The bouncer started walking across the way and out. We escaped from the place and didn't pay the bill. But the girls took the money we gave them and it was the value of the set-up and other equipment that was brought in and so we couldn't use the cash to shoot the picture. We all had to share hotel rooms, but nobody did any sleeping. They got me cheap at 500 a week.

DF: When I suppose to write THE GOLD BUG for Corman's Poe series?

CG: Yes. I was supposed to write THE GOLD BUG for Vincent Price, Peter Lorne, and Basil Rathbone. I thought all day what a cast! I got very excited and wrote that. When they were doing MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH in London, I met Vincent on the set and Roger told him what I was doing and he said "Yes, yes, tell me about it!" I said - well, you're taking Basil Rathbone down a veritable out corridor of your Southern mansion with no roof on it and the walls are charred and you're using it for a hook shop for all the family historians and you're showing him all the family portraits in the hall. He says "Oh no, not again! I can't stand that! I can't stand that! I can't stand it!" I responded - yes, but the portraits are all famous stage paintings that everybody knows. You look at the last one and say "This is my mother - doesn't she have an angelic smile?" So he caught on right away. So he says you have to have The Laughing Cavalier as his uncle. Oliver Golding.

I was going to be LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS again where Peter Lorne worked for Vincent Price as his sort of a law around the place in this huge hockshop, and all night you would hear this faint music and it would be the gold bug dancing on the strings of the harpsichord doing the gold bug rap. Peter Lorne kept the bug in a mull box and stayed friends with it by giving it drops of Looovaton - Fuglesteen looses. And it would sing people or bite people and turn them into gold which is a variation of LITTLE SHOP and BUCKLE UP BLOOD. And there were all these famous poems too. There was a one about a bright and a little girl by the pool in the White Rock and they offered the statue for sale. Then when the buyers tried to sell them down, they'd turn back into flesh. But it was very long - over three hundred pages and Sam Arkoff was annoyed. It never got made. I saw him in Rome sometime later and tried to talk him into dubbing a lot of Italian music pictures into comedies and he says "Why don't you write me a picture about the Civil War?" and walked away.

DF: What did you do on REVERGE OF THE BLOOD BEAST (aka: SHE BEAST)?

CG: I wrote that in three days to get an entire ticket for my girl friend (Griff) who worked as screenwriter and 2nd unit director. That was originally a comedy about communistic Transylvania with Barbara Steele, Mel Welles and Paul Mankinsky who played a cop and produced. That was shot in a couple of weeks there. Not much I can tell you about it. It's a buff (buff) picture in Europe.

DF: How did you end up working as a screenwriter on BARBARELLA?

CG: Well, John Philip Love was a friend of mine and Vadim was looking for another writer for BARBARELLA, and John recommended me and De Laurellis hired me. I went up and stayed in their house with Vadim and Jane Fonda out of Paris for a month and worked on the script. They'd already shot some of the picture when I was called to work on it. They'd even scored it with Beatles music temporarily. It was really bad. It was stupid.

DF: How come only Terry Southern got screen credit?

CG: He took the material from the comic strip the French, and that was all he did. Then they had fourteen other writers and then me. I don't get credit because I was the last one. I guess I rewrote about a quarter of it that was shot, then re-shot and added the concept that there had been thousands of years since violence existed so that Barbarella is all through the picture was very clumsy. She shoots herself in the foot and everything, and it was pretty ridiculous.

There was a great scene that was cut out of the picture where Fonda and Anne Parille were in this bubble with a bell in the shape of a woman and the machine at the end of it. The Black Dutch comedian Barbarella that's her fear that the world was destroyed since she came up there and ceased all that trouble and ended her world in boiling lava. So Barbarella is a comic and says, "What can I do?"



JANE FONDA
BARDARELLA David Hemmings Ugo Tognazzi



An atmospheric dance sequence from the dream-like **THE UNDEAD** Rembrandt. His sequence was shot at a supermarket on Sunset Boulevard to keep costs low.

So the Queen says, "Now we both go on until we starve to death in this bubble, so the best thing for you to do is kill me." And Barbarella says, "No, no you kill me." The Queen replies, "No if I do that the magma will rush in and get me, so you have to kill me so that the magma will throw you up on the beach." So Barbarella says, "What do I do?" And The Queen says, "Put one knee here and one knee here," because they originally shot it with Barbarella saying, "What are we going to do?" and the Black Queen responded, "There's nothing we can do, so we might as well make love" then the two of them dropped around trying to make love in the bubble.

It was very awkward and embarrassing and stupid. Neither one of them felt it and they didn't want to do it. This came behind the proper build up and it was really something. David Bailey was shooting this and he said, 'This is the hottest thing I've seen on film and it will never get through' and it never did. Right in the middle of a *Saltwater* castaway on the sea castles Pallenberg leaning and savor the whole thing. The bubble knows them up on the beach. That's all you had in the picture that entire scene is gone.

The stuff with Claude Dauphin is mine and the suicide scene is mine. It's been a long time, 1968. But the most fun was staying at their house and talking all night with Vadim about politics. That was during the Pueblo Incident - and telling all day with Jane about Mexico. At that time she wasn't known for her politics or for being a good actress. The military invited her to entertain the troops in Viet Nam, but she was planning to defect and join the Viet Cong. Everyone was looking at her and imagining her plowing through the jungle alone with the Viet Cong and what would have happened to her.

CG: How did you get involved with **DEATHRADE 2000?**
 CG: I was in the main feature and I called Reginald [he said, 'I've got something for you.' I looked at the script and it was by Robert Town. It was completely bizarre, unbelievable, and crazy. It had a lot of interesting things in it. And I said, 'You're asking me to change first?' Because he said I was always having trouble over the bizarre things in my screenplays. He told me that since the script had been written by a bizarre person, he figured I look another one to fit it.

So we started from scratch. There were some things we kept out of our original version of the script: Frankenstein (I know, and those cars – another idea of Roger's – were added later). So I met Paul Berlin, who was already set to direct it, and we reached a mutual conclusion that it had to be as bare as, somehow a political satire, because there was nothing else we could do with these cars.

Roger wanted a straight, hard-hitting drama, so it was a conspiracy with Paul and everyone in the office at times to keep Roger from knowing. So I worked on a long list and fugitives said that was very funny and a comedy. (But) and Roger found out about it and canceled the entire script. He was really enraged. So we started again on a much more modified, semiserious, straight version, which Paul sort of left out all the blood. So Roger hired me to be a 2nd unit director and put in all those blood bits. I told Paul that the way I would do them there would be so absurd and so overstated that the film would still stay funny.

It didn't happen in the case of *HECKYL AND HYPER*. I fought with the producers over blood and gore versus comedy and lost as usual. Of course I've been told that at one time Roger wanted to rip up the engine cover in *DEATHRACE* and drown out most of the dialogue.

OS: He does that a lot. He'd play up the sound effects or turn the music way down so that it would sound very distant, and he'd play with the dialogue too. He was very big on sound effects. Yeah, he played with DEATHRAVE and tried to get rid of as much comedy as possible.

OG: The picture was in the can, so I took the stuff and had to add a lot of action. I looked through the material and added to it in different places. For instance, this scene where Sylvester Stallone drives down to the end of the pier: originally, there was a man sitting in the outhouse with the top door open and the machine-gun car pulls up and there's a conversation with Stallone while this guy is still in the outhouse. A dumb conversation. So Stallone

backs up and kneels the outhouse with the guy into the river and drives on. There weren't enough actors in that for Roger, and you could see when the outhouse fell into the river there was nobody in it.

So I went back, got rid of the outhouse, cut around the outhouse, and had a fisherman sitting there and had Stallone chase the fisherman up the river. There were bits and pieces from both scenes. All of Stallone's dialogue was from the other scene. There were little things like that throughout.

CS: Yeah, it did about two and a half million dollars, so it must have been

CG: I write about six screenplays of DEATHSPORT and they were supposed to go ahead with the last one when Candice got taken away by Begman to be in SERPENT'S EGG but I'm really certain it was because Roger hated the script.

What kind of a freak is Roger Corman? The stories I read about him make it sound like he's an idiot-savant—part genius, part demented person. CG: Demented yes, genius no. The genius that he might have had is gone. He used to be full of ideas and frustrated concepts and things for pictures, and he'd throw it all thing money to the writers and get them all out, and they'd make a picture out of it. But now he's just a man who's got a lot of money and is only interested in saving what's his. He's interested enough not to notice almost nothing so that when you see his pieces of crap, here and there are a few moments of interest, right? Which was I love a sample of the other shockers that were being made at the same time because those producers knew what they wanted and they were pure garbage and no great loss. Roger's stuff was

OF Nonetheless, he did show some technical skill as a director and his films are usually well-paced.

CG: He took out everything that wasn't fast and ruined every picture that way. Absolutely! In recent years, he has ruined all of his pictures, and they're losing money. They are incomprehensible. Did you see **SMOKEY RIDES THE CUSTY**? It was shot through from without being seen.

OF: "Was I that the film built around stock footage?"

CG: There's this Roger from a few years before that is BAIT or TB. It was with them and had a car. Roger was complaining that BAIT MY DUST and other players like him were taking these down the highways and challenge the cops and run other cars off the road. The series of people blamed for this, and that's what they called it. Car Wars. So, I went to the newsworld is over the phone and I was Roger saying, "I want to do a picture called CAR WARS using the stories from five old New World survivors."

I wrote a script which wound up being called WHAM BAM MERCI MADAME. It was very insane, and it used all the stunts in different ways, and he hated that script and he never did the picture.

But last year he called again and offered me a lot more money than he ever did before. I guess I got flattered, and I went ahead and did it. He had Max Apple in Texas go ahead and write a script around all the wackos and phases. But Max wasn't allowed to see them. It was too expensive to write a movie and send him prints or anything else, so he had only vague descriptions written down so that the studio were — and nothing worked! So I made a lot of changes in it and he made Roger very angry, and he tried to cut it out of the action of the six pictures. But he couldn't because he needed all the production rights. Then he cut out all the motivations and all the character descriptions and left me with a jumbled mess! The sex thing occurred with me, but I don't know the depths.

OF UP FROM THE DEPTHS was Corbett's attempt to do a JAMES film, right?

CG: Of course he stole it from JAWS, JAWS II and THE DEEP. It was written by a secretary at the office with the intention that I would polish it up. I was hired to direct but he wouldn't pay Writers Guild prices - he thinks the Writers Guild is in a conspiracy against him personally - so the idea was that I would use my discretion, persuasive to submit an unpolished script.



Charles B. Griffith (wearing overalls) directs Oliver Reed who is chewing on Janet Julian's ankle in a sequence from **SMOKEY BITES THE DUST**.

Somebody would run up and say "You know what happened? A monster just ate a girl on the beach!" And that person would tell somebody else and that person would tell somebody else and so on.

So I wrote a party version called **SMOKEY AND FISHER** and the Filippinos were going to shoot it. They were trying to do a film. They made a funny looking flat for which I have a picture of. They were all set to go, but they went the script to Roger figuring he would love it and of course he hit his desk and told them to live me and everybody else. They wouldn't let me but I still had to do the polish, so then I just did it for awhile.

There was a lot of rage to just go ahead and shoot it, but then the action didn't work because the Filippinos didn't work. The film never worked once. It was supposed to attack people, to chew them up and trash and do all kinds of things and I didn't do anything. I had a night-to-night fish and eight-to-eight fish, and a fish and a head which would come across the ocean on huge bamboo rafts towed by outrigger canoes. It would take them two hours to cross the bay with this stuff. It never worked.

The speedboats never worked because the propellers were beaten up by the coral reefs. The underwater didn't work because there were no lead weights to get people down. They were bobbing to the surface. And nobody would show up. The entire production was for six months. I had a 106 minute rough cut that I sent back, and when I flew back to L.A. the next day, it was 75 minutes long. That was some of Roger's creative advice. I've never seen the picture. I just saw the black and white work print that I was working on **SMOKEY** and **UP FROM THE DEPTHS** were the last two pictures that I did for Roger, and they were both so butchered that it was made impossible for me to get any money. Those pictures are so bad no one can sit through them.

DF: What about **DR. HECKYL AND MR. HYPER**?
CG: That's my old friend Menendez Cohen from Israel whose house I stayed at ten years ago and worked on a couple of pictures that weren't made. And he says, "Call me up if you want to make a picture, an \$100. He wanted to make **HAPPY HOOKER GOES TO HOLLYWOOD**. It took my agent too long to negotiate so it was already in the works with other people.
So Cohen called me, what do you want to do? I told him that I happened to be black comedies, and I had a list of things that I wanted to show Franco's Coppola. I showed him the list. There were a lot of things on the list that were jokes and were not intended to be pictures. He saw one **DR. FEELGOOD** and **MR. HYPER** in which a hippie invents a new drug that turns everybody into advertising executives.

He said, "You want to make a funny **JEKYL & HYDE**?" I responded sure. He gave me the go-ahead. But I had only three weeks to write it and to prepare the picture, one week of which was in Oliver Reed's hands, four weeks to shoot and two weeks to edit. It was terribly, terribly rushed for a modern picture in color with lots of elaborate art direction and stuff. This cost \$750,000 and Cannon can't release it. They don't know how to release it. They don't know how to release any of their pictures. They keep making them, but they have a sales manager who only knows how to sell porno, and nothing that they've made has made a nickel. Most of it never goes out at all.

DF: How can they stay in business or afford someone like Oliver Reed?
CG: They paid him \$100,000 cash and they owe him another \$100,000 when the film breaks even, which it never will. They owe me money when the picture breaks even, right? (**HECKYL AND HYPER** was sold to cable before it could make a profit).

HECKYL AND HYPER could have been a very good picture, but we had gotten behind. They were trying to get Oliver Reed to make a picture. He is very humble and meek and helpful and nice to everybody. His attitude is that good-looking guys can get away with murder. So when he takes **DR. HINKE** a magic diet pills which turns you instantly thin, he drinks it and



"My god, I'm beautiful!" Boasts Oliver Reed from **DR. HECKYL AND MR. HYPER**. Charles Griffith had only three weeks to prepare for the production.

becomes Oliver Reed, right? (Reed turning to the mirror and seeing himself without the **DR. HINKE** making a eekie in a mock-serious tone, "My God, I'm beautiful!" This line usually brings the house down.)

But then we got the problem. Oliver was great as Heckyl, wonderful. He played the part with a kind of New York accent and everything, but when he was Hyper, he didn't know how to do it. I tried to explain to him that Hyper was a figure of Heckyl's imagination, that he was confused himself and tried to live up to Heckyl's notion of what a good looking guy should be and what should happen to him. When these things don't happen, he freaks out and kills girls. But we got rained out the first week, and we wound up doing the murders and the interiors and the night scenes. Reed played Hyper as Oliver Reed, slow and ponderous. There was no way - the contrast was too much - the performance would work. There was no reason for him to do that, but he didn't understand my interpretation, so the picture jers and nall the people get up and walk out. The comedy is weak. There are guys with two left feet - Chuck Houston plays a guy with two left feet - there was Mel White, Ken Worf, Jackie Cooper, Caroline Collet, and Sunny Johnson, who was in **FLASHDANCE**.

DF: What do you think of the violence in today's horror movies?
CG: Here is I was one who did it in the years when we could show violence. For instance, in **THE UNDEAD** I had a shot where we back somebody against a wall and the headman swings an axe cutting off the head and the body slides down the wall with blood spurting from the neck. The head steps on the saw blade against the wall. In the Filippino filmmakers couldn't do anything like that. So we were all frustrated in those years. But boy, as soon as it started to appear on the screen, it made me sick. I don't want to do it or see it.

We did it a little more elegantly in **HECKYL AND HYPER**. It kills a girl with a lion's head. It's a real lion's skin and Oliver was using it like a hand puppet, and Hyper takes over and kills the girl with the lion's head, bites her neck, and there's blood all over. I thought we would be able to cut the last part off, but we weren't. He sticks a girl's toe in an electric light socket and electrocutes her, and her hair stands up on end. That kind of stuff.

DF: What would you like to be doing? What are your future projects?
CG: I'm writing one called **CUT OF THIS WORLD**, which is a very large scale science fiction film. I can't tell you about it because the idea is the best part so far. New World wanted me to come back and write a **Sword and Sorcery** picture, but they didn't want to pay me and I wasn't going to do it for nothing. Let's see, there's **THE TOTAL ACCORD** and **DR. HYPER**. **MR. SCORNY GAY** which will be the Jewish **L.A. GAGE AUX FOIES** for Cannon. That's about all I can tell you about now.

DF: Thanks for the interview!

Charles Griffith's scripts have not lost their bite or cleverness as time has progressed. Many of them have an important underlying theme - the dangers of totalitarianism in **IT CONQUERED THE WORLD**, the price of success in **THE SHIP OF HORRORS**, sports as a national distraction in **DEATHRACE 2000** and perceptions on the importance of inner and outer beauty in **HECKYL AND HYPER**.

In addition, Griffith has shown inventiveness in other areas. In **DR. HECKYL AND MR. HYPER**, the old **L.A. Zoo** is used as a catering, dangerous jail. The Fred Katz film score for **LITTLE SHOP** was badly lifted from another source and effectively paired with the film. His second and director of the action scenes in **Conan's THE SECRET INVASION** is both exciting and well-paced. Griffith's talent, his gift for inspired fantasy, has too long been ignored.

PHOTOCOPY/BACK ISSUE SERVICE: We have a collection of the Table of Contents from issue #17 through #33, photocopies of which can be purchased for .40¢ per page. We will be glad to photocopy any specific article, including those from "out of print" issues, for .40¢ per page.

MAGAZINE SALE: **MAD MONSTER** #26, #29 for \$4.00 per copy. **ROUND-TRIP QUARTERLY** VOL. 1, #5, #6, #7 for \$2.00 per copy. Program Books from **STAR WARS** and **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND** available for \$3.00 a copy. Contact the Editor.

SOLAR STRENS

By Dean Chambers



The Aresian myth of female supremacy first received its time due in stories about primitive warrior women who existed either in the stone age or in our century on some remote island. The rationale of each plot was that isolation or deprivation had forced their independence, and if the women tended to be hard-bitten it was because of male injustice or a latent distrust of strangers. When the female proved successful down here exploitation looked skyward, moving it into the domain of outer space.

Newsoundings did little to reemphasize the cardinal clause. This was true with male chauvinists, who were allowed to identify with the heroes. Sometimes a woman came with them for token contrast, but the male viewpoint shaped every impression. The delivery of an Aresian culture either sees the women extend an initial welcome with ulterior motives or display outright hostility. No matter how haughty or domineering they are, they need men to improve their society or cope with some menace to it. A segment of the women or just one woman appears, sexual desire, becoming attracted to the men or just one particular male. The truly inelegant women either belong to the ruling class or rise in some criminal manner to become part of it. Rebellion follows or the physical environment collapses allowing the heroes to escape.

Solar stories living or visited planets were only the beginning. Those who descended upon us were often an invader, invigilant, accompanied by resistance or somehow were mortals themselves. From our planet, earthly agents of justice like Barbara Steele Star, and the android Galaxia operated in the future. Pornography always the barrier-breaker for any topic with possibilities of sales—gave us space women whose receptiveness to sex demonstrated the universality of the most common language. They expended its love at gratification or courted carnality in the traditional ways to achieve a mother and

The space women category this article is concerned with was defined by two authors who normally rate high esteem—Ben Hecht and Cherise Beaumont. In 1952 Hecht wrote *Queen of the Universe*, a sensational story about independent women who could not properly manage their world. It was not a film plot but Variety caught the wrong drift and announced that year it would go into production.

When sailing and not the degenerative disease that killed him in 1987 was his manuscript, Beaumont misinterpreted statements Universal. He wrote a space women spoof for Abbott and Costello that was pothole

rejected, supposedly because he was not a staff writer. Her long after Beaumont found herself entering a script based upon the idea.

The script was ABBOTT AND COSTELLO GO TO MARS (1953). Male leading named, Mars rounded Mars commercial, although some of it took place on Venus and the rest was earthbound. Onilla (Lou) who does odd jobs for an orphanage, crashes a model plane into a store window. Chased by a cop, he hides in back of a patrol truck. Another handyman, Lenter (Bud), drives to a secret rocket research base. Or Wilson (Robert Page) builder of the rocket, invites some scientists to select its destination. Accidentally launched by Les and Onilla, the rocket creates the only half month during some grisly astro-battle around New York. In New Orleans, Mars becomes a state of mind where space-cultured Les and Onilla see weirdly captured Mars' (Doris) catastrophes.

Bud and Lou had become so lethargic that a second-team pair of funny-men were added—Hercule Molishon as Muggly, a pseudo-intellectual crook and Jack Khruachen and his knuckle-brained partner, Harry. Escaped from jail, they discover the rocket, penetrate spacecrafts and rob a bank with paralyzing guns. They Les and Onilla, then fly to the Venusian realm of Queen Allure (Jean Blanchard). Under her are various Mars-Urven contestants, including Swadish Avrie Dberg and American Jessica Loughery, once married to Jack Webb. A grand captain is Jean Willes. Dr. Barwell's nurse in INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS. The policy of rounding glamour pageant winners became practically de rigueur in these times—probably in the hope that no one would notice Elmy sets if heavenly bodies obscured them. Technically GO TO MARS was solid, some of the women spectacular and those mentioned professionally interesting. Dberg did not look quite as erotic as she would when her weight increase was linked to her bustline.

Blanchard is surprisingly inspired Allure, a classic wronged woman in reverse of love. Because her king had cheated on her four centuries ago, she had away male banished. Provenly approved the new king Onilla must prove his fidelity by holding silver balloons that pop if he even thinks of another woman. As second in detachment device shorts him full of electricity. When the other women want the man best, they see images of scored addresses who balance the chesswork with tickle slices of beef. By comparison, Les, Onilla, Muggly, and Harry are sad specimens. They are allowed to leave, but since the secret of Venusian youth is allergic to

Orville's idea, a "young" girl becomes an old hag. Takeoff is impossible until a tokenified of levitation he smuggled aboard is jetpowered.

The rocket returns to Earth for a second moonlit flight. Another lady—the Statue of Liberty—sees it coming and ducks. Les Orville, Muggsy, and Harry are honored for conquering space in a gala showcase parade. Watching from Venus, Alpha decides to send Orville her regards, a custard pie dropped from a flying saucer.

ABBOTT AND COSTELLO GO TO MARS was more eye-filling than anything else they did in the Fifties, but when judged by their old criteria of amusement, the film was a near disaster. Blatant slapstick was often trotted out for their own sakes and some were actually tasteless (the aged Venusian girl made more repulsive by her easy coarseness on the fabby, wrinkled body of a real senior citizen). McMahon and Kewshian were acceptable, but when considering the film as challenges to the destruction of the myth who invented "Who's On First?" and knowing their fanbase that Abbott and Costello, it is an outcast to mourn, even if the slapstick reflect some fine pulpitude. Thankfully there were no zingers. However, when **GO TO MARS** was issued on eight-millimeter film, some idiot retitled it **ROCKET AND ROLL**.

Sam Hecht and Universal had the sophistication to create delicate camp. Not so was the first, most vitaminous, and only 3-D women picture that pretended to be adult, **CAT WOMEN OF THE MOON**, also filmed in 1950. Its producers used the brilliant Alan Zimbalist and special effects technician Jack Robin. Robin deserves a reprieve for imagining what was originally a cerebral idea. His cat women were a race who had exhausted their natural energy. Through carefully directed thought-molding, they imbued our greatest scientific geniuses with the concepts they took credit for. Eventually, the cat women expected a rocket to visit Luna and aboard it they could migrate to Earth.

Zimbalist hired musical celebrities, casting Sonny Tufts as rocket commander Laird Grainger, Victor Jory as Kip Penker, and Marie Windsor as Helen Salinger. Douglas Powley, the dialogue director, and William Phipps supported them as Walt Willis and Doug Smith, respectively. The inclusion of Tufts was almost a certainty that **CAT WOMEN** would be consistent with most everything else in his career. Richard Burton has made bigger bombs, but Tufts stockpiled more than a few mini-magnets. However, it is about Helen Salinger, or because of her that most ladies thought it was a rip-off. Ironically, after take-off she casually edges her make-up and herp. During a tense, she utters "Alpha." To Laird, who loves her, poor Helen has a "touch of space madness."

The ship's navigator, Helen, suggests that it is in a certain area on the dark side of the moon and leads the group in a particular direction. She is such a tobacco-choker that she carries her weeds in an outside pocket of her space suit. One removed to demonstrate how lethal the sun is. As magical as symbiotically without it happens to be, so is an oxygen-filled drink. A giant spider representing a horde of them is killed one way by stabs and another by Kip's nostril.

The Grecian-styled cat women city was supposedly assembled from sets left over from MGM's version of **MARCO POLO**. The surrounding sky is cloudy and Monument Valley, Arizona, is part of the terrain. The weaving of period and geographic flavor as alien phenomenon was a shortcut that went back to the Flash Gordon serial, where various design names and the animals sported only their relative details. Similarly superficial, the black-faceted, German-looking cat women first appear as floating phenomena who lack their warlike and venial. This is some way to make a good impression. "Welcome to the moon," says their leader Alpha (Carol Brewster). The others are Alpha's confederates Zenta (Suzanne Alexander), Lame Lame Lame (Dustin Monroe), and the Hollywood cover girls, played by magazine models Judy Wadde, Betty Allen, Clyde Marshall, and Roscoe DeLain.

For years, Alpha has been in telepathic contact with Helen and enlisted her to join the crew. This much of Helen's idea came through, condensed into the intangible Alpha asserts over one Earth person who, coincidentally, is also Helen. Only Kip, himself in love with Helen, remains aloof from the cat women's elusive hospitality. Lame Lame Lame appears attracted to Doug asking him, "Do you have a special Earth girl?" His idea of a heavy date—which sounds like a punch in the face—is driving to the beach and bringing a coke. The cat women take over her mind so he can give her the coke. Helen is that essential for their plans. She is controlled by a lunar image on her hand that takes a reflection in water covered. Discovering this Kip helps Helen making her realize that she does not love Laird. Walt gets some gold—a common metal on Luna, but it is a bonanza for himself. Zenta agrees to show him more if he will take her to the rocket to indicate how it works. When Zenta honors her half of the proposition, she kisses Walt in the back.

Taking Helen, Alpha and Zenta run for the ship as Laird, Kip, and Doug follow. Lame Lame Lame tries to interfere, but Alpha lets her give a rock blow to the head. Doug finds her body before Kip shoots the escaping telepath. We have only his word to take for their demise. "Doug!" he shouts. "The cat women are dead!" Only three of them actually are and the fate of the real is unresolved as Laird, Kip, Helen and Doug take off.

Time has been pretty brutal to the scientific advance of most older space men but the technical naivety of **CAT WOMEN** was actually more entertaining than the more elaborate, but Alpha let her give a rock blow to the head. Doug finds her body before Kip shoots the escaping telepath. We have only his word to take for their demise. "Doug!" he shouts. "The cat women are dead!" Only three of them actually are and the fate of the real is unresolved as Laird, Kip, Helen and Doug take off.



Top: The comedy team of Abbott and Costello was a tired duo when they made **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO GO TO MARS**. Space heavies caught the viewer's attention. Bottom: The sexual allures of a superior alien race fire held with the **FIRE MAIDENS FROM OUTER SPACE**.

derivative props state from exposure in their proper reality perspective. This would be repeated in **CAT WOMEN**'s nearest rival— including one film (**MISSILE TO THE MOON**) that played the same tune over with only the mildest touch-up surgery.

Showing no skin, the cat women wore too much, the only appealing one was Lame Lame, and the Hollywood Cover Girls lacked the real parade parade of space women who had been so-far-something-on-another. Even the spider was not used to full advantage. It might have been more exciting had it (or them if it played him again) killed Alpha and Zenta. Elmer Bernstein composed the music and it wasn't as good as the staff heard when Roman was stomping around Bronson Canyon (he scored for **ROBOT MONSTER**).

This audacity of **CAT WOMEN** earned it instant immortality via satire that could be appreciated for putting Al Zimbalist in his place. Les Green, a writer for "My Little Margie" radio show, had visited the **CAT WOMEN** set, as an old film called **CAT WOMEN FROM OUTER SPACE**. Comedy shows then looked over to see the space race, but this made no difference to Zimbalist who took a regular exception. He filed a lawsuit against all parties charging that "My Little Margie" had insured and paraded his film, plagiarizing the plot. Zimbalist demanded \$1,200,000 in damages, but the suit was settled out of court.

Anthony Dexter, John Warner, Fleischmann, had been successful on the stage, but his tragic lightning did not strike the screen. The live actor along by the Valentine film biography came, he suffered professionally because he was a new face in Hollywood. Russell Narens (and Francis Harp) when they made their ventures had already been well-known. Dexter's career did further into retrograde with **FIRE MAIDENS FROM OUTER SPACE** (1950), a British swag at **CAT WOMEN** written and directed by the low American Guy Rolfe. Lame Lame Lame, Harp, and Narens who had found their self-assured prestige. Rolfe gave his name the biggest and most loudly letters. He had the clarity, though, to credit the suit by Gordon. The reason why **FIRE MAIDENS** is best remembered for what it sounded like.

Right-tipped uncomfortable Dexter is physical Luther Blair, summoned to England to take charge of high-funk Project Thirteen, an expedition into outer space, states a navigator with a hellpore bombast. Cockpitted in a control cabin the size of a disc jockey's booth, Blair,



seemed Talish's desire, "cannot live without men." Having been down the marriage aisle so often, Doherty should know.

Yvonne has Patterson summoned to her quarters so she can seduce him. He tries to convince her that she is wrong about all men, but she is determined to go through with her plan. In a startlingly horrific moment, Patterson rips off Yvonne's mask, exposing a face horribly burned by radiation. Some of it also affected her mind. On first seeing a sex reversal formula to the unmaking scene in PHANTOM OF THE OPERA comes a warning: Subconsciously, we are probably meant to divert their thought, but content exposure is such beauty conditioned as to feel the desired reaction. Not many color makeup before had been this gruesome - certainly none on actresses. After Earth is blown up, Patterson and his friends will die. On the trail of disgust comes girl for Yvonne.

Talish and her followers help the Earthmen escape, but they are recaptured. Her role, luckily, is not discovered and another attempt is made. When Yvonne is subdued, Talish experiments her before her mask. This way Zee Zee gets to become queen for at least part of a day until the guards arrive it. Secretly, Talish's group tampers with the Beta Deintegrator with the Earthmen forced to watch Yvonne achieve it. The guards and the councilors are overpowered as a series of explosions kill Yvonne - making her whole body consistent with her face.

Talish becomes the new ruler. Since it will take several years for a relief party to arrive, the Earthmen escape in a ship called the Venus. His eye-rolling eeriness is a kick because Paul Birch momentarily escapes the patented prudery that had been so effectively risen by Roger Corman. The feeling that this has of been a force is confirmed in the end credits when Laurie Mitchell is billed as "The Wicked Queen."

QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE was probably the best-produced film of its type after ABBOTT AND COSTELLO GO TO MARS. Great movie moments could have made it the most well-made serious picture providing there had been no others to dull the novelty. Those Venusian women possessed the power to actually destroy Earth, and their leader, though a victim of circumstance, was a psychotic monster with one of the most horrible female faces ever seen. Berndt was shown in realising that the subject was too far down the aisle to be handled straight. His adroit coup was an albatross miracle: the making of a lampoon out of a dramatic idea that had been originated by humor.

Art casting was a bonus. Eric Fleming often gave stiff, self-conscious performances, but this only enhanced the discomfort of Patterson. Dave Willock and Pat Waltz supplied sexual impudence with such results as "Check out that babe!" and "How do you like to sleep that one to the high school prom?" The women not only included beauty contestants but a bevy of striking little-known stars like Lisa Davis, Barbara Deniro, Kathy Martin, Mary Stevens and Lynn Garveright. Natural oddity Zee Zee Doherty was the first woman of Venus by default, but Laurie Mitchell was able to second her as the married living, any of the women gave to a real performance. Garveright was also memorable as the most radiant guest, "the word 'bachelor' in their language is Earthese for 'scholar'." When unaccompanied Orville tells the Garveright Amazon to go "babe!" herself, she prods him with a ray gun, restoring "bachelor" man!

The joke mantras of Gabor were used in a soft-ish way again in ARRIVADERCI BABY, a 1964 Tony Curtis comic drama dealing with a modern Bluebeard. Curtis, who must have known about the very Howard Duff was wrongly accused of murder in SPACEDAYS sends gagerious Gabor up in a satellite. Over a radio, her voice HARRIS in a castaway's dressing "Darling... darling... darling..." It was also the last year in the life of Eric Fleming. He and another actor, Nico Mendez, were on the backstage River in Paris filming an episode of a TV adventure show when the scene Fleming was in captured and he was dropped.

As far as Richard Curnie to make another film that could show billing with his FRANK RUTHERFORD'S DAUGHTER. The company list that CAT WOMEN OF THE MOON had been very enough, so Curnie decided to fit

her 1958 remake, MISSILE TO THE MOON. First among their shelved projects was the name, a variation of CAT WOMEN's remake title ROCKET TO THE MOON. This project began with her greater profile, using a premise theme by Nicholas Cernia that started with reusing rhythms from the most boundless sold over simulated in celestial music. Personality delineation in the introductory reel was vividly drawn and imaginary rocket technology contributed to suspense.

For teen interest, two of the first people to reach Luna are juvenile delinquents: Gary (Tommy Cook) and Lon (Gerry Clarke) escape from a county farm and hide in the missile, built by Steve Dayton (Richard Travis) and his scientific partner Dick Green (Michael Whelan). Gary - already a drug - is the corrupt West White counterpart. Decept Lon is another David Smith. The person with some connection to life they will find is Dick. The government wants to take over this private project and make him and Steve work under his supervision. Determined to take the missile up tonight, Dick enlists the aid of Gary and Lon. Steve and his friends, June Saxon (Gailly Downs), are trapped in the lower compartment just before the ignition are fired.

When meteorites attack the ship, Dick - seen - them over a blank TV picture like real life. A loose battery falls on him - Giving Steve a radiation, Dick urges him not to change to greet course and de-gassing "Lilo." Another V-2, the missile lands on the moon by having its takeoff shaven in reverse between two foreground hills in Red Rock Canyon that left to camouflage the launching pad. While exploring the area, Steve, June, Gary, and Lon are menaced by webbing rock Gumbys that force them into a cave. It not only supports oxygen but wood fire burning torches. Suddenly, they are subdued by sleeping gas.

The group awakes to meet the Lilo (K T Stevens) and the other female remnants of Dick's people all wearing Cat Moon style makeup. Lisa France is Lisa Stone of THE GIANT GILA MONSTER. Raithe Hay Miss Gernsey of ABBOTT AND COSTELLO GO TO MARS, Tania Velle, Miss Yugoslavia of QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE, and Miss Hines. Playmate Marjorie Deke. They should have all been save-stapling graduates so they could have been billed as the Hollywood Cemetery Girls. Blind, the Lilo pretends to make Steve for Dick so she can learn more about the Earth people. She says that had brought Dick to Earth never returned. Rapidly the oxygen here is disappearing. Dick had been betrothed to another: Alpha (Nina Bara). Special Moon Girl Zeeme (Marjorie Hallen) has a name like CAT WOMEN's Zeeme.

Executing her right to challenge her, Alpha abortively attempts to hypnotize the Lilo. A second Lambo (Laurie Mitchell) devoted to hand-made hair) shows Gary another moon commodity of wealth - diamonds. Steve, June and Lon return to the mine where they left their spacesuits, finding them gone. Lambo tries to warn them about the lurking "dark creatures." More giant spiders, they are the poorly-reconstructed maskup from TARANTULA! One kills Lambo in a scene that recent TV prints have curiously deleted.

Assessing the Lilo, Alpha updates her: hypnotizes Steve so she can marry him, and harshly condemn June to the extermination chamber. Asked by Zeeme, Gary and Lon about the spider and inner her. Defying Alpha Zeeme liberates Steve from his spell. He jumps, and Lon escape together while Gary pauses to sack some diamonds. Alpha asserts her power on Zeeme - ordering her to release the gas. In a final gesture of defiance, she violently destroys the oxygen supply, creating a powerful suction. Even outside, Steve is partially enslaved by Alpha who experiences a lot of traumatic dementia, ordering him to return. Steve recovers.

The rock man surrenders Gary. Refusing to die the diamonds, he falls into the sun. Like Helen Sargant a cigarette, he burns up - but not on public video of late. In the most persuasive death scene, his self-sufficiency and as the smoke clears, only a bleached skeleton remains.

Crude and comical after its strong early scenes, MISSILE TO THE MOON delivered the explosion of CAT WOMEN before it did, although it lacked with the acidic naivete found in Dick Cuthbert's more late. Musically, Nick

Juvenile delinquents Tommy Cook and Gerry Clarke are among the first to visit the moon in Richard Curnie's cheapie, MISSILE TO THE MOON.



Genie left a lasting contribution, parts of which were heard in BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN CYBERD 2007 (with Richard Travis in a small part) and even the following nightmarish scene that opened the "Sweet Prince of Delancy Street" episode of *Nealed City*.

The space women genre as the *Flies* depicted it was over, but as exploitation device it still caught producer's imaginations. NATURE GIRLS ON THE MOON (1962) was an antique nude where lunar nudists hypnotized two astronauts.

Although the Lunar women of the Swedish-American JOURNEY TO THE SEVENTH PLANET (1962) kept their clothes on they were the ultimate made-to-order sex objects. The heliocentric feature of a subterranean master brain, at its doubles of the pure five actresses (among them John Agers) left behind living in a facade of a Swedish village where their commander Barry (Carl Ottosen), grew up. Escaping under cross conditions the women are taken yet embody real ones who held meaning for the crew. This paradox creates some poignancy following the destruction of the brain when Barry leaves with his lady love Ingrid (Anne Brynner). After takeoff, she hides away a will-to-survive in a doomed day the death of a powerful intelligence that created her for and. The end can be seen as the shattered wish-dream of those who try to rekindle romantic fire out of spent sales of fantasy.

WOMEN OF THE PREHISTORIC PLANET (1966) was a racial space opera that pitilessly avowed woman—showing only barbaric men (of a world that was actually infant Earth). The real women were space crewmembers. One came from a world called Carthage. She and her Earth husband sired a handsome Adam (Robert hot) who mates with a half-Carthagenian Eva (Irene Tau).

One of the Russian sci-fi films directed by Roger Corman was PLANETA BURIA (THE STORM PLANET). With Curtis Harrington directing it's John Sebastian. It became VOYAGE TO A PREHISTORIC PLANET (1967) using brief footage of Basil Rathbone shot at the end of his GUNN OF BLOOD assignment. More film was taken of Faith Domergue, who interacted with Rathbone early in the editing. Corman even recycled the title when he had Peter Bogdanovich remake STORM PLANET as VOYAGE TO THE PLANET OF PREHISTORIC WOMEN in 1969. The production co-director was Bogdanovich's ex-wife, Polly Platt (credited with some of his early hits. He used the pseudonym "Barak Thomas" for directing credit, but typed his involvement (an economy measure) by having the story as the voice of its confused hero.

A handy advance of assembling film out of inserts is spot-lighting the presence of name players whose scenes can be shot very quickly. Marie Van Doren was the queen of some normal-bodied mermaids who lounged around a rocky beach hearing her communicate with them "telepathically" in voice-over. A parody from the Soviet science was made their "God". When the astronauts killed it, leaving a race became something the women wanted to avenge. Marie's non-role was about the last thing the director did after losing the protection of Albert Zugmeyer, who made her a sleek star in movies where she was more alive and actually part of something.

In Power and Mermaid horror tale THE MALTISE BIPPY (1969), Dick and Dee were the producers of an erotic space nude called LUNAR LUST Pamela Rodgers, a rising reformed comedienne from their office, was a jet set actress trying to play the retarded, John Dwyer of the Moon. Before Martin her relationship leading into can teach her the meaning of the word love, the backdrop rolls up—exposing the one from SUMMER LUST.

Certain pictures have been adapted in photoplay periodicals. Zeta was a defunct adeline that created its own feline in poster form. One story was adapted into ZETA DNR (1969) as an extremely obscure Tigon film that unashamedly blended sci-fi porn and James Bond parody. Called *Wish* again, British script: Dean Adams as Zeta DNR, supervised by the Argentinian, and James Robertson Justice, also former starlets Yvonne Strömberg and



Zee Zee Guber (far right) was THE QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE, but she was definitely the star and feature attraction of this colorless opus.

Valerie Leon (who tolled in English shorts like "Carnegie Robinson" and "Jane Carnegie") were in the cast.

Secret agent James Ward (Robin Hawdon) invites Ann Gison (Mia Brangard), the secretary of his boss, to his flat for an evening of supper and strip poker. At Ann's request, Ward dispatches his most recent mission. He was assigned to investigate Major Bourdon (Janice) and his henchman Wayne (Charles Hawtrey). Bourdon wanted to exploit the power of the Argentinian women who can travel freely through the third dimension. They are more mobile than other societal space ladies. Here, Earth girls are kidnapped by other women instead of the usual sci-fi alien creatures who are without or have a deficient number of limbs. Rather than function as mere body factories—a wish is possible since there are no Argentinian men—the girls are converted into other Argentinians and given full citizenship responsibilities.

Bourdon wants to know the dimensional movement technique. He and Wayne follow a Soho stripper named "Tall" (Yvonne Del Mar), who is kidnapped by the Argentinians. Ward follows them into their dimension and debates Bourdon with the help of Gisho (Anne Gail), an Argentinian ally. He sent an Argentinian Ann reports to Zeta DNR that Word knows too much. Sprung away to Argive, he submits to the enjoyable task of examining every Argentinian mother-to-be.

A Carme (shepherd of too many misanthropic shades, ZETA DNR was too sexy for kid stuff, too immature for respectable sci-fi and too tame for exposure. More professional than "Carnegie Robinson" and too tame for explicit soft-core. It was the only general release space women movie at its time with an R rating. The bondage of James Ward was a mastery stroke of revision against the phallic over-security of 007, who thinks that his cinematic masculinity can let him write a blank check. Reduction to a captive stud does it better Ward himself as his assumption benefits the enemy without the least resort on their part to coercion.

In FLISH GORDON (1972) when Dale Andour (Dorothea Heide) refuses to marry Emperor Wang (Willy in Hays), she is turned over to the laudan Liba women—a group of manless space women who prefer it that way. Removal of the harder-breathing sex alien, diminished the faulty presence of their multi-aged hook-nosed queen. Heide played by Cindy Sampson.

To date, no current "R" or "X" film has resurrected the original solar arena format returning it to its original *Flies* roots. With ideal gas unashamedly as many long-banned elements it would be a porn natural. The efforts, of course, would have to be NASA. The planets they go to would have to be new, owing to our increased familiarity with the moon, Mars, and Venus. The next can take care of itself: imagine Kristin Henshed as Alura, or Marilyn Chambers as Heide, or Dorothea Heide as Liba, or Sarah as Talish. Knowing How Worlds (see Part 1 for material-type, even actors and rock men can get in on the action).

ADVERTISING, LOOK AT US. Three years ago our circulation was 1000 copies. For the last two years our circulation has increased to 1700 to 2000, and reached a high of 2500 with issue 320. It is a credit to us that we have steadily reached 3000 copies. Help us to grow and grow with us—advertise in MIDNIGHT MARDUERS! (Ad Rates can be found on our Consents Page.)

CINEMAGRAPH: An Appreciation of the Fantastic, is now available and includes coverage of the STAR WARS trilogy, SUPERMAN III, PSYCHO II, THE SHINING, and NIGHTBEAST. Also featured is an interview with DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE director Robyn Marshall, as well as an interview with veteran character actor, Harry Brandon (perhaps best known for the role of Barnaby in the Laurel and Hardy classic, BARNEY IN TOWN), and as star of the Republic serial DRUMS OF FU MANCHU. Also included are book reviews, record reviews and much more. CINEMAGRAPH #5 is 64 pages—digital size, typewritten and printed on glossy paper with full-color front and back covers and interior color art. \$3.95 per copy or \$9.95 for a three issue subscription to: George Grover, P.O. Box 10025, Beltsville, Maryland 21052.

What is this *THING* with the power of mind over matter?
...there beyond the stars your unspoken fears... deepest desires
come alive... and you are trapped in a spectacle of terror...
your secret fears united against you!



FOR ADVERTISING, LOOK AT US. THREE YEARS AGO OUR CIRCULATION WAS 1000 COPIES. FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS OUR CIRCULATION HAS INCREASED TO 1700 TO 2000, AND REACHED A HIGH OF 2500 WITH ISSUE 320. IT IS A CREDIT TO US THAT WE HAVE STEADILY REACHED 3000 COPIES. HELP US TO GROW AND GROW WITH US—ADVERTISE IN MIDNIGHT MARDUERS! (AD RATES CAN BE FOUND ON OUR CONSENTS PAGE.)

William Dean Interviewed: From LEOPARD MAN To LEECH WOMAN By Tom Weaver And Michael Brunas

and N.Y.



Long ago, before the days when Hollywood was more than just the television capital of the world, the major studios reigned supreme, owning the vast complex of theater chains and, as such, were each obliged to crank out well over 100 feature films a year to meet the demand of eternal insatiable hungry audiences. These were the years of the 'B' picture—short, unpleasant assembly-line fare which inventively found its way to the bottom net of double-bills. This was the stomping ground of Edward Dean, a veteran Hollywood writer whose output spanned practically every genre the screen could devise, although most frequently dabbling in private eye melodramas and 'who-dunnits' such as *THE FALCON'S AUDIT*, *THE FALCON STRIKES BACK*, *NOTORIOUS LONE WOLF*, *THE LONE WOLF* and *HIS LADY*, as well as a host of *Burton Blackie* thrillers. His other credits include such diversions as *THE FIGHTING GUARDSMAN*, *SWING OUT SISTER*, *PISTOL PACKIN' MAMA*, *SLIGHTLY TERRIFIC GALS INC.*, *THE PAY OFF*, *BOSS OF THE TOWN* and *THE GALLANT BLADE*. Although many of his films have been relegated to oblivion by television stations which now spin the black-and-white programmers of this period, most *MIDNIGHT MARQUEE* readers should be familiar with Dean's horror credits which include *Vai Lewton's THE LEOPARD MAN*, such Universal thrillers as *THE JUNGLE WOMAN*, *CALLING DOCTOR DEATH*, *THE CAT CREEPS* as well as the *Siskons* seen *Columbia* film *THE SOUL OF A MONSTER* with George Macready.

It wasn't until the 1950's that Mr. Dean realized his life-long ambition to become a feature film director in Europe as well as Mexico. In fact, he directed *Meo* as a first 3-D adventure. He made his U.S. directorial debut with *SHACK OUT* (1958) which remains his proudest achievement, but horror fans will probably best remember *CURSE OF THE UNDEAD*, a unique fusion of the horror and western genres, which he directed and co-wrote with his wife and frequent collaborator Mildred. This was followed by *THE LEECH WOMAN* in 1960, a film which brought to a close the major cycle of low-budget, black-and-white horror and science fiction films of the 1950's.

The Deins are still active in the movie business, producing screenplays including a black comedy called *YOU CAN'T FOOL A BUZZARD* and *THE PGHS* which Mr. Dean insists "is about people not here." Mr. Dean is also actively employed as a television director and graciously consented to chat with *MIDNIGHT MARQUEE* about his best-known horror hits.

MM: Perhaps you can tell us how you broke into the movie business.
ED: I was a tap dancer to start with. From there, I started working in studios, state fairs, night clubs. I remember one date with Ginger Rogers at

the Oriental Theatre in Chicago, another at the Elit Street Theatre in New York with Bud Hope. I finally came out to California where I got myself a job working as an editor, working with Bing Crosby's wife, Dore Lee. It was a pretty good job, and six months later I saw myself at the preview. I was so horrified by my image on the screen that I decided that was the end of my acting career and that I would try to get behind the camera. I went from studio to studio, day and night, and nothing happened. These were the days of the Depression and you couldn't get the night time left along with it. Finally one night at Schwab's Drug Store, after I had written about 50 or 60 stories, I was sitting next to Mae West and we started to talk. I told her about one of my stories and she bought it for \$750. That was my first assignment told. At what did you ever find employed? Universal, RKO, or somewhere else?

ED: I sold a story to an actor named Edward Ellis, a character actor at RKO. He sold the story to the studio. I asked to do the screenplay, but the studio did not want any part of me. The studio executive turned the story over to Nathaniel West who, if you recall, wrote *The Day of the Locust*. A fine writer, really very good, but in this case he completely ruined the story. It was called *ALL THIS AND MORE* and wound up being a musical called *NOVINA SWANSON* it. Finally I began to get writing assignments here and there for independent studios. I could do a screenplay in five days and get \$500 for it so if I sold two a month, I was very rich. A thousand dollars a month is those days was fantastic!

MM: Among the pictures you worked on at RKO was a *Vai Lewton* horror five called *THE LEOPARD MAN* for which you received an additional dialogue credit.

ED: There were quite a lot of stories I wrote but did not receive screen credit for. When I worked with *Vai Lewton*, I went to work, writing on *THE CAT PEOPLE*. No, I was not a dialogue director for him. I worked on *THE LEOPARD MAN*, but I would rather not tell this part of the story. It would just hurt the writer who did receive credit. In those days there was no guild to protect screenwriters, so the producers would come down and 'take a deal.' He would say, 'Now, you forget your screen credit and we will take care of you—give you an other screenplay or another story to do— which we not always a loan.' We just hoped the producer would keep his word and be really kept it. It's a good lesson. Never make a deal for credit. Take it and fight for it.

Regarding *Vai Lewton*, this was probably the best man who ever lived. Gentle, understanding, considerate. Naturally, he had to die young because people like this just don't go on. He did employ others editors for directors. He thought that editors were more suited to be directors than anybody else.



William Dahn recalls the scenery apparent in JUNGLE WOMAN.

By the way, Ted Leland never had a desk in his office. He had a coffee table. We sat around it, drinking coffee, smoking, discussing the story. He wouldn't put himself behind a desk in an executive capacity for fear that the person standing in front of him would feel inferior.

Miki: What was the Universalizing factory like? Were you requisitioned with some of the other prolific Universal horror writers?

EO: I recall having a job there as a reader for a few years which was another horror story. We called this The Snake Pit. When I finally began writing for Universal, I got to know Brenda Webster, Dwight Hatcock, George Lincoln Brown, Michael and Bernice Schubert. In fact, Bernice and I were friends, and Brenda and I would work together at other studios. In those days, we were not considered to be plot or writers, we were hacks. That was the way we made our living. There were 'A' pictures and there were 'B' pictures. We were in the 'B' group. So we hacked them out as quickly as we could and that was it. The 'A' writers were the ones who sat with their feet on the desks, enjoying life. The only place where we were considered hack writers at the studio was the storyroom.

Miki: Do you recall working on the screenplay of 1944's JUNGLE WOMAN, a sequel to CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN? Economy appears to have been the watchword in preparing this film, considering its stringently bare running time of 54 minutes.

EO: I don't remember much about JUNGLE WOMAN, but the economy you talk about was commonplace. We always used old sets from other films. In fact, many of the 'B' films were written and designed for the set rather than the 'A' film was finished with it. These 'B' pictures, in order to sell them, had to have exploitative value, and these jungle pictures and horror films were exploitable as we did them. 54 minutes was about eight to a 'B' film because they were only used as filler, like a newspaper.

Now, I want to clarify one thing. I have the feeling that you've got the feeling that all I did was horror film. Actually, they were minimal. I did about 40 films and out of those only six or seven were horror films. These were rough times. The only thing you cared about was paying the rent. I was writing to do anything and everything - musicals, horror films, jungle films, etc. Your script for CALLING DOCTOR DEATH was the first of the 'Terror Sanctum' melodramas at Universal. The film employed a sort of 'abuse of consciousness' device that was used throughout the series in which the Lon Chaney Jr. character read his thoughts off-screen. Was this your invention?

EO: That was because Lon Chaney Jr. begged me to put the dialogue on the soundtrack because it was too technical, and although he played a doctor in it, I never could say the words. I wouldn't had anything to do with actors. The only time I had anything to do with an actor at that time was when J. Carroll Nash came to my dressing room at Universal. He had read the screenplay for CALLING DOCTOR DEATH and thought it was one of the best examples of screenplay writing he had ever read, which was a great compliment coming from the wonderful actor. He wanted me to direct it but they preferred this other director, Reggie Le Borg, who had just come from MGM (whose credits were two real musicals). Reggie turned out to be a good friend and that was that.

Miki: SOUL OF A MONSTER was a very interesting film which a seldom reviewed. The concept of the Rose Hobart character being an ordinary from Salem is very intriguing. In fact, the screenplay has been likened to the Faust legend. How did the screenplay evolve?

EO: I could not get a job at Columbia. My agent said they didn't want any part of me. So one day at Schwab's again, I met one of the producers at Columbia Studios, Ted Richmond, and asked him why I couldn't get a job. Well, he said, "I was very simple." All he had to do was tell him a story that he liked and he would put me to work on the screenplay. I asked how much would I make, and he said that they would not pay for an original story. You tell it to us and we'll pay you for writing the screenplay.

I told Ted to forget it. I got out, drove my car up the Garopis, turned on the radio, and the first music I heard was "The Faust Symphony." It struck an idea so I turned the car around quickly, drove back to Schwab's. Ted was



The "Faust" legend becomes transformed into THE SOUL OF A MONSTER.

still there and I told him the Faust story with branchcoats. Ted loved it, and I started writing the screenplay the next day which happened to be Monday.

While we were writing this, we had an executive producer come in and took over our shoulders. His background was athletic coach at some high school. He just despised the story. He didn't think it made sense, he didn't think it was interesting. I couldn't very well tell him that he was contradicting the story of Faust for this would have been a reflection of his pinhead brain, so we just had to take abuse until it was finished. SOUL OF A MONSTER turned out to be a very interesting film. You must remember that when a writer wrote a script in those days, he wasn't in control of the material. Many times other writers were called in to add a line here or there so you didn't know if the material they used was yours until you actually saw the picture.

Miki: Rose Hobart contributed a fine performance.

EO: Since I was a writer and a second class citizen of Columbia, Rose Hobart would have been anything to do with it. Her performance was good because she was a Broadway actress and this was her profession.

Miki: CURSE OF THE UNDEAD is an extremely interesting film in that it is the first film to combine horror elements with the western formula. How did you come to lose your film in a western setting?

EO: This was the funny thing of all funny things. My wife and I were sitting around doing nothing, and one day she said, "Let's do a little writing, just for practice. So I dove into the pool and came up with the craziest title in the world: SAT ME GENTLY, a western horror story about a leg woman running around the desert eating little boys. We wrote it as a screenplay. It must have taken about two weeks. We had a lot of fun with it. We had mimeographed copies made with red covers with thick letters which said SAT ME GENTLY. We decided to hold these copies around to our friends for laughs.

We went into Schwab's Drug Store for a soda and the first person we saw was Rose Gershenson, a friend of ours and a real doll. We told her with straight faces that we had just completed a sensational screenplay for a horror film called SAT ME GENTLY. Everyone around the table looked at each other. There were no smiles, no laughs. I just thought it was tremendous. What an intriguing title. So, Mike and I played it straight and Rose said, "Why don't you let me give it to Joe?" We couldn't very well say no. Her husband, Joseph Gershenson, was an executive and they were gods in those days. The following morning Joe called us up and said, "Why aren't these the good stuff? You don't give us. I want to make this picture. I'm not only going to make it, but I'm going to give you a second screenplay to do, THE LEECH WOMAN. How do you like that title?" I told him I loved it. He said, "Well, I don't like your title. We are changing it to CURSE OF THE UNDEAD." So we had Michael Pate play it straight and this became a legitimate vamp picture.

Miki: How was the effect of Pate disappearing and his clothes defiling at the end of the film achieved?

EO: This was done because of the price. It was very cheap and we did it with dissolves. Otherwise, the special effects department would have to spend thousands of dollars.

Miki: What was Joseph Gershenson like as your producer? And what were your stars - Eric Fleming, Michael Pate and Kathleen Crowley - like to work with? Pate, a long underwear actor, gives an exceptionally fine performance.

EO: Joe was a doll. A good friend, very kind - he had a great sense of humor. I really enjoyed working with him. He got his start as a conductor. Today Joe is retired, sits in his garden, and thinks of the many days he had to deal with us idiots.

By the way, it was a pleasure working with Michael Pate. He was very cooperative, did everything I wanted, and added to it. Kathleen Crowley was a doll. At that time she was feeling too well and it was an effort for her to work, and she did a good job in spite of her feelings. CURSE OF THE UNDEAD got a lot of publicity and made quite a bit of money for the studio. For a small picture, it was successful.

I went on to do THE LEECH WOMAN. I did not write this. It was written by David O'Brien. For these pictures, the producer would get a title like

HIS BODY IS AN EMPTY SHELL THAT HIDES A LUSTFUL FIEND!

CURSE OF THE UNDEAD

starring **ERIC FLEMING**
KATHLEEN CROWLEY
MICHAEL PATE
with **JOHN HOYT**
BRUCE GORDON

Screen by EDWARD GELB; Music by EDWARD GELB and MILORAD PETROVIC; Produced by JESSE FINE; GERSHBERG • UNIVERSAL INTERNATIONAL PICTURES

THE LEECH WOMAN and call in a writer who would do it for order.

MM: Could you comment on the effective make-up work by Colleen Gray and Estelle Hershey when seen as aged women in the film?

ED: THE LEECH WOMAN was a big joke. I remember when I was finishing it, Joe Darnenhorn said, "Giddy! I can't afford these special effects, so figure something out." Well, how to make her turn into a monster was very difficult, so I was watching down Hollywood Boulevard one night and I looked into this shop where they sell tricks, horror faces, rubber masks, and I saw the great hairy hand. This gave me an idea. I went in, bought the hand, and we did the whole thing in cuts. In other words, Gray would be dancing with the guy, looking very good, and then we would cut and stick the hairy hand on her, and next shot would be this hand creeping up his shoulder. This created the effect we wanted. So from there, we did the rest in cuts: her face, and all of the rest.

MM: What were Colleen Gray, Grant Williams, and Gloria Talbott like to work with?

ED: Colleen Gray was just wonderful to work with. She was very cooperative and did anything we wanted just to help the film. Gloria Talbott was excellent. Grant Williams is a great now or something like that up in the hills. John van Druten was also in the film. I believe. Didn't we have a scene where he talks into this microphone? The funny part of the story is that he kept soundproofing around in this pot and nothing would happen. He just couldn't go down, so we attached some pulleys to his leg and I pulled it and held him down for about three minutes. When the bubbles stopped coming up, we pulled him up, nearly drowning him. He took himself a little seriously, but he is a really nice person.

MM: What is your conception of what horror film is and what is wrong with today's horror films?

ED: Today's films aren't horror films at all. I think they're terror films and the stars are the mechanical effects. These are who do the special effects and the make-up effects are the geniuses of these films. It was nothing to do with directors or writers.

I saw an AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON the other day. Mills had to leave the room. She just couldn't look at it - the blood flowing and the guts spilling out all over. We had to create everything with illusion. Performance doesn't matter anymore. Can you imagine Spencer Tracy in DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE running around with blood running down his nose? The man hunched over, he had hair on his face and he went on from there. So, it's another world. I've dealt with both sides and I like the peal better. Much better. It's not the same anymore.

Let me tell you my concept of a true, good horror film. Quite a true book, Mills and I wrote a screenplay called HANG ME HIGH. It was a very tragic story about three people, set in the West around 1890. A crippled father who can't play the fiddle becomes the hangman, a situation which causes misery for his wife. This was so sad, really. The ultimate in horror films. This tale of three goes through: The mother despising the father because of the attitude of the towns people toward them. If the mother went just a bit further in a state the town's people would not buy the blanket because she was the hangman's wife. No one would play with the boy. He was only 14 or 15 years old, and only the towns where would come and all play with him. This to me, was a unique horror film.

I pitched it and peddled it and nothing happened and then, by accident, Martin Brando made it. He called me up and I came over to his office and he said, "Ed, you got Tennessee Williams." Well, he could have had it for nothing if he wanted my script. He gave me his personal check. He said he didn't even want the company to have it. I said I wanted to direct it. He said fine.

Well, the years have passed. Have you seen the film? I haven't. I never directed it. He never made it. Too much money involved. Too many different things. People are no longer under any artistic pressure. It's not like Brando's pressure. It was better for Mr. Brando to do something else because it was better for the studios and the bankers.

Now, if it were made, you would have seen a unique horror film. No blood involved, no bats flying around, just the horror in the lives of three innocent people. The horror - the monsters - was the civilization around the family and believe me, these monsters can destroy you when they want to.



Pictured above is the imaginative Belgian poster from William Grey's office in Bergen-Bessert "B" Street, THE LEECH WOMAN with Colleen Gray.

THE BEWILDEREAST published irregularly \$2.00 per copy Dennis Fischer, 355 N. Spaulding Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90038

CUNGEON 13 published monthly \$1.10 per copy Jason Simon 2560 N.E. 18th Street, Pompano Beach, FL 33062

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT THE NEWSLETTER, published quarterly \$2.00 per copy Derek Jensen 7450 Village Drive, Phoenix Village, Kansas 66208

LITTLE SHOPPES OF HORRORS, published irregularly, \$3.25 per copy Richard Kleinman, 1821 Forest Avenue, Waterloo, Iowa 50701

THE SPLATTER TIMES, published quarterly \$2.00 per copy Donald Farmer 154 Big Spring Circle, Cookeville, Tenn 38502

CINEMACABRE published irregularly \$2.50 per copy George Stover P.O. Box 10005, Baltimore, MD 21204



In Hollywood, in the 1930's studios frightened audiences with the creation of a new monster mythos - Frankenstein, the Invisible Man, the Mummy, and Dracula - and off-beat aging (ol' the James Whale directed variety) and studio set-piece designed mood. During the 1940's studios frightened audiences by further developing and refining what it had created ten years earlier. By visually adding color, splash! blood, and a touch of sexuality, the 1950's best exemplified by Hammer Film Productions of England made audience screens and squirms by mixing the visual depiction of horror more graphic. Big budget special make-up effects and increased reliance upon visceral gore and violence kept the chills fresh and gripping throughout the 1970's with exceptional cinema fare such as THE EXORCIST and TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE ripping through the censored fetts of the white-knuckled audiences. But what about the 1980's? Hollywood and Europe have Q.D. on slash-thriller movies, zombies who return from the dead to tear out and eat delicate organs, ultra-gore has reached its logical antebellum propelling state of the art gore effects into hum-drum teddy. Other than at neighborhood video shops where they prosper, horror movies in the 1980's are becoming less inspired and far less viable than they were in the hey-day of the over-astounded late 1970's.

But there exists one breed of horror film that is flourishing today artlessly if not lavishly - the new breed independent movie-maker who having been a fan of the genre since his childhood graduates to 15mm Belex or perhaps even 35mm after doing a few shorts or industrial films (the route George Romero took in the 1960's). We are talking about film-makers in their twenties who have no studio backing, have a limited budget, and literally must stretch the timing of their weekend horror films over a period of months so that investors may be seduced to raise the money to continue the production. In this specific case we speak of writer/director Fred Hennert (BASKET CASE) and Sam Raimi (THE EVIL DEAD) whose respective films happen to be among the best horror films of the decade thus far. This article will attempt to analyze what exactly these two filmmakers are doing right on minimal budgets that large corporate studios such as Universal, Paramount and Warner Bros. no longer are able to do. The lessons taught by Hennert and Raimi must be heeded to regenerate an over-saturated, repetitious, bland and uninspired film genre that all of us still love and wish to save.

From the beginning it must be made apparent that this article is not necessarily a defense of the modern ultra-gore movie because explicit

eye-gouging, chest-puncturing, or flesh-ripping is only one means to achieve an end. Modern horror movie classics such as CARRIE, HALLOWEEN, THE HOWLING, or even THE EXORCIST feature visceral make-up techniques as a means for making an artistic statement, telling a story, revealing something about human relationships (admittedly, superficially at times - but most people would agree that the essential message inherent in horror films can be summed up in one word: Blood). Films such as the wretched MANIAC or the over-the-top FRIDAY THE 13TH series feature mutilation for gore's sake. We have no story or relationships developed between people, instead, we have one visually effective gore/murder sequence fed loosely onto a tissue thin plot as an excuse for another gore sequence. The sin is no worse than the science fiction film genre when it too forgets about human motivation by over-playing meticulous special effects technology (however, technology is never as offensive as gore, but in the long run, it can be just as dehumanizing and destructive) for its own sake. Both BASKET CASE and THE EVIL DEAD utilize ultra-gore (remember, both are at heart exploitation films which must conform to a set criteria of rules for financial survival), but artistically they both transcend such gore trappings making the use of blood and guts essential in making a statement. Thus, in these two films, the gore becomes artistic statement which develops far beyond the genre's requirements of icing on the corpse bloodshed.

Frank Hennert's BASKET CASE is a patented gem operating successfully on many different levels. The true horror of BASKET CASE does not result from the gruesome, blood-drenched murders but from the strange, twisted relationship which exists between Sam's twin brothers Duane and Belial. Typical Samson twins these brothers are not because Belial is Duane once drunkenly describes his memories a squashed octopus' within normal sized monstrous human head connected to a dwarf-like mass of mosh-pun flesh housing two oversized ears with ferociously clawed hands. Belial is connected to Duane at his side near the waist. Their mother died while giving birth, and the bereaved father only wants an operation performed which will separate Belial, considered by him to be almost like a large tumor, from the body of the normally shaped brother Duane (resulting in the probable death of Belial). The operation is performed when the boy's quiescent soul is away from town (a strangely odd character, the awn lovingly cares for both brothers accepting them for what they are - human beings) by three doctors, at least one of which is a veterinarian. The screaming Duane is bodily forced onto the dining room table

where the make-shift operating room has been arranged. Belial is dragged into uncondemnedness and literally out from Duane's side as blood spurts everywhere on everything. At first blood-flow Duane screams from lapses into unconsciousness. The brothers who share telegraphic communication with each other, are drawn back to each other after the operation when the healing and heavily bandaged Duane goes in back of his house where the garbage cans are located only to see a full plastic garbage bag wiggle. Apparently the doctors wrapped what they thought were the dead remains of Belial in the garbage bag ready for the moving truck collection. However, Belial is still alive and his brother Duane keeps him alive in a wicker basket which he pad-locks to the top of the stairs. After the death of the guardian aunt, the young nurse Duane and his frailish brother Belial head out to the city to avenge the attempted murder of Belial by the three doctors. Just from these proceedings, told in fastback in the middle of the movie, the viewer can recognize obvious tongue-in-cheek intentions. The idea of a net operating upon a human being in a dining room table is absurd, but Hansel and Gretel makes these proceedings seem matter of fact. The sequence where Duane finds Belial in a plastic garbage bag is hilarious - imagine how the garbage man would have reacted when they unloaded their daily haul! But with one last image of the trash bag wiggling as one claw cuts through, Hansel/Gretel allows our imagination to run wild. Similar examples of black humor abound.

The major setting of the movie is Hotel Bralin located off 42nd Street in New York City where the innocent tragic hero comes looking for sanctuary. He always protocolically carrying the wicker basket housing his brother who instantly displays a large roll of bills in front of the hotel manager and a few of the occupants, as he asks for a room. The hotel manager is telling equal mad is a true delight, adding some inspired humor to the already proceedings. "You want a room for a couple hours or a couple weeks? Give me a hint!" The strange occupants and local color to the tenement hotel - old decrepit, stagger, comb-like, over-the-hill black hocks hurry, jumpy, into the rooms and cheerful bag ladies walk past forcing the manager to exclaim at one point, "is this the real house of a hotel?" Almost from the beginning, the viewer is allowed to know and case about this seamy while underbark of human drags. By casting a slightly humorous aura around the hole in the wall of society, these people and situations become more easy to accept and appreciate.

When Duane brings a bag of hamburgers up to room #7 for his brother and himself, the resulting scene requires a new scene looking for sanctuary. At the Little Shop of Horrors, Duane and Belial, not yet fully seen by the audience, making loud, over-exaggerated munching and snacking noises similar to the sound of Saturday morning cartoon characters sloppily eating away. To add to this effect, the basket filters and shakes as Belial eats. You almost expect Belial, who never speaks verbally to yell, "Feed me!" Afterwards, when Duane is lying restlessly in bed in the middle of the night, he is awakened by the constant "conversing" of his brother. It is not going to sleep up to the nightstand. "You aren't going to sleep at night?" He almost yells. It is almost to start a conversation. Of course, the viewer only hears what Duane says because after the operation Duane lost the ability to communicate telepathically with Belial, but Belial can communicate telepathically with Duane.

After the first of three doctors is murdered at the very beginning of the movie, Duane and Belial prepare to plot the destruction of the second doctor, Dr. Neederline. He is working in his office. Duane becomes friendly with the beautiful blonde receptionist who offers to be Duane's tour guide. Duane says with other things on his mind, rejects the offer at first, then agrees to an all-day date Wednesday when the receptionist Sharon has the day off. For some ironic reason, the Manager Duane becomes, the more Sharon seems to be attracted to him.

Dr. Neederline recognizes Duane from the past and telephone the female Dr. Kutter, a bitchy 40-ish nurse who is wiring and dining a very young man in her apartment whom she calls Goggles, and therefore, she doesn't have the time to talk to Neederline or feed his wants. Duane returns to Neederline's office after Sharon leaves, late last night, tells him to hurry up, and warns him not to forget the address book (the means to contact Dr. Kutter). As was true with the first on-screen murder but a developed more thoroughly here, the cinematographer employs a shaky hand-held camera technique cutting between close-ups of the terrified face of the terrified doctor and subjective shots of what the doctor sees. Duane sees, Duane sees. The audience, again with the over-exaggerated "heavy breathing" of Belial and telegraphic doctor/whistle seen. Once we cut to the face of Neederline, the breathing ceases to be heard because our perspective is from the point of view of the frightened doctor, not the deformed beast. When Neederline turns the office lights on, the viewer has the first prolonged clear shot of the monster hanging on the wall. His three mouths and eyes move as the creature jumps and attaches itself to the rack and upper chest of hapless Neederline as Belial's mouth chews the human neck and claws tear his face and later his eye. As the doctor succumbs and slides slowly to the ground, the doctor's face is a canvas of red pulp with blood streaming from his mouth. As if this gore is not enough, the claws of Belial rip open the doctor's chest, and as the viewer watches the doctor's dying face, small rivulets of blood are thrust upward from below the bottom frame line of the screen further dripping this man's face in a torrential shower of crimson as he screams and strains to be free.

This scene playfully takes to the next morning as Duane feeds Belial (once again kindly tucks inside his basket) raw hot dogs as he again makes cute, cartoon eating sounds - in direct contrast to the more macabre aspect of his personality. Duane who does not want Belial to know he has a date



with a beautiful female, presents his brother with a used portable TV set and a newspaper to amuse himself while he is gone, telling Belial he is spying on Dr. Kutter (preparing for the third murder). After Duane leaves, the arm and claw of Belial protrude from the basket and attempt to turn the TV knob, however, the awkward size of his hand only manages to knock the selector knob onto the floor. As Duane's date continues and the bedroom lit through off spectacularly the incident of both arrives. Sharon and Duane kiss. Physically, Duane's personage exactly what is occurring and the editor instantly cuts from the kiss to Belial's various screams from the basket. The creature shakes the TV set on the floor and climbs down onto the floor. Once there, Belial continues to pull out drawers in anger, knocks chairs over and generally wrecks the room. This entire subsequence is shot using stop-motion animation for Belial. While the budget limitations are readily apparent, this shaky animation sequence is oddly effective. Finally, in direct parody of Dr. EXORCIST, the slump-like Belial sits at the end of the bed facing the rear leg in his hand and shakes the bed rapidly up and down. Because of all the racket, the degenerate landlord investigator finds the room a mess, but finds nothing else. In frustration, he mutters to himself, "I only run the place. Why should I know anything?" When one desecrated tenant, Donovan, silently sneaks back into Duane's room to steal the wall of money he was lying on the shelf, he unfortunately peeps into the mysterious wicker basket and is torn apart by Belial. For away in more beautiful territory, Duane obviously senses that something is wrong and desires the confused date surreptitiously back to his seamy apartment. Once they both arrive at the scene of the murder, Duane pushes Sharon away, telling her he doesn't want anything to happen to her.

After the police are linked investigating the apartment for clues and questioning Duane - at one point a policeman opens the wicker basket to find it empty - a nosy morose girl of Belial protrudes from the toilet bowl where he has been hiding uncomfortably for some time (another allusion to LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS).

From this point onward, things really grow weird - but also poignant. Holding a psychic conversation with Belial, Duane screams, "I'm not desecrating you. I need time for myself!" And this odd human relationship forms the core of the movie, elevating it far beyond this exploitation fare. As is true with many horror thrillers, the destruction or disruption of the basic core family unit forms the heart of the conflict, the source from where the creation of the "horror" begins. Who could ever love the squat, deformed freak except a loving brother (and sister, a rather wacky aunt, if Belial loses Duane he loses everything - and Duane's growing interest in the pretty female Sharon, his relationship with the pathetic brother, Duane finally mutters, "We'll always be together".

Attempting to drive away the pain and isolation and unbearable problem that both drives him to end eliminate him from Belial, Duane goes



Belial, the human load, brutally rips apart another helpless victim in Frank Henenlotter's **BASKET CASE**. Notice the over-use of blood and gore

to a bar where he soon becomes drunk sharing more than a few drinks with Casey, the friendly black hooker who tents a room in Duane's building. In the midst of drunken ebullience after Casey asks what's in the basket Duane seriously awakens, "My brother... We're Screamers twins". Casey, thinking this to be the intoxicated ravings of a joker, retorts, "You don't look Oriental!" Duane then bravely shares a terrific life story to which Casey laughs hysterically not believing a word. Duane finishes, "We're both of us messed up... I don't know which of us is worse".

Later when Casey returns to her apartment after putting Duane to bed, she voyeuristically wanders for bed-wetters' smelly lace "testifies". Once she is sprinkled out in bed, Belial, who has been hiding beneath one of Casey's pillows, starts to slowly fondle the "lamey lace" (see shirt only to awaken Casey who screams holy living terror). Obviously Belial is curious to understand the ever more explicit sexual signs which have been awakened in brother Duane. He too desires sexual fulfillment. One final out shows Belial frenziedly stuffing at Casey's long abandoned red panties.

The murder of the third doctor, Kutter, becomes the most outrageous and clearly conceived of the movie. The sequence begins with Duane sitting quietly in the vet's waiting room, wider basket on his lap. As this playful large dog faithfully sniffs away at the basket as offered patients continue to wait unconcerned. When Duane and the basket are admitted to see Dr. Kutter, Belial awakens pops out of his basket going for the jugular as Duane quietly looks on. In an outrageous insult to girls (later Hissvall's), Lewis Belial masturbates rips Kutter's tongue from her mouth as rivers of blood flow. If this were not enough, Belial opens a medical drawer which is full of scalpels and other sharp instruments. He forces her face down into the drawer, and when her girl-satisfied face is pulled back up, the screen is filled with one of the oddest, ugliest, and most hilarious scenes ever perpetrated on celluloid. Kutter's head fills the frame as her receptionist looks on. Kutter is bloody wide-eyed, and his live strategically positioned scalpels ridiculously sticking out of her face. Near death, Kutter appears to take the biggest breath she can muster, screams heavily trying to stretch out the pain, and finally when she is out of with just an unlabeled cry she all too carefully faints slowly dropping out of frame as her exhausted screams fade to a whimper. Even though such excess is visually grisly and over-the-top, it becomes wildly humorous and most carefully choreographed.

In one of the most terrifying scenes of *corvus infirmitas*, Duane is ready to go for the deep rest as Sharon promises, "Take care" when Belial tears himself from his basket leaping furiously. Duane instantly covers Sharon in a blanket and throws her into the hall without explanation. Later as Duane attempts to sleep, Belial, sensitively, extends his hand toward the unconscious Duane almost as though to apologize. Then in frustration, the pathetic human load jumps onto the window ledge and repeatedly screams (in short bursts) out all his pent-up pain to a non-hearing world. This sequence, very short, is emotionally charged. Duane, in the meantime, is having a dream while he is turning completely insane and reaches the bedroom of the shrieking Sharon who is made beneath the covers. Using subjective camera point of view, we the audience become the acutely frustrated Duane who pulls down the covers and strikes Sharon's breasts, legs, and feet as she lies sleeping. His hands the central image of the sequence, act hauntingly as though the hands embody the internal rhythms and experiences that Duane possesses. Suddenly, as if awakening from a nightmare, Duane's body suddenly sits up, and when we return to Sharon's bedroom we hear concerned breathing as we now subjectively see the creature's distorted hand atop Sharon's nude body. Unfortunately, she awakens, screams, and Belial in fright chokes the life from her body. In one of the most weirdly related scenes ever put to cinema, in medium long-shot, the deformed body of Belial straddles the nude, fully exposed and quivering body of Sharon. The pathetic creature quickly mounts and rapes the corpse as blood slowly flows from her genital area. The outraged Duane enters throwing his brother into the wicker basket. Duane yells heavy eyed, "She was good, she was pure... The first girl I ever loved

and you destroyed her!" Hoping to destroy the spirit of Duane that has separated the sexually insatiable brother from himself, Belial goes Duane in the gonads holding the penis-often boy several feet in the air. Employing outrageous logic, perhaps Belial feels that by castrating his brother, by destroying his sexual urges that Duane once again will only care for Belial. However, the two brothers struggle and fall sideways outside the hotel window. Belial is on top and dead hanging onto the floor. Belial sign the other claw wrapped around his brother Duane's neck - it is a castrically trying to save his life as he slowly chokes the very life from him. Gross Duane escapes from the fatal choke grip. Belial's grip fails and the two sons both fall to their death as the hard concrete below. Sleazy onlookers scream and gather around.

During the early 1970's, films such as *BUTCH CASSIDY* and *MIDNIGHT COWBOY* developed the concept of male friendship and the brotherhood that sometimes exist between males. Scores of other films have illustrated the relationship between brothers and the sibling rivalry which can result. *BASKET CASE* is not the first horror film to deal with these concepts, but it does artistically explore these thematic considerations on a very sympathetic level compelling the viewer to ask to what extent are we our brother's keeper? While *BASKET CASE* may additionally be viewed as this more serious level, its primary purpose is to be exploitative, perversive fun - as any analysis of this film dare not become too heavy-handed or pretentious. But any film that can be so repulsive, so perversive as sick, so thought-provoking and so hilarious cannot be all bad. *BASKET CASE* is a refreshing change.

In quite a different vein we now turn to Sam Raimi's *THE EVIL DEAD*, probably the superior of the two movies discussed by virtue of its dead-end sensibility, its artistic expression and technique, its innovative camera work and its grim resolution to scare the audience at its own! If *BASKET CASE* is weirdly, sensually perversive then *THE EVIL DEAD* is one filmmaker's nightmare brought to terrifying life. And on this level *THE EVIL DEAD* may be one of the most terrifying movies ever made.

The primary aspect where *THE EVIL DEAD* deserves merit is in its atmospheric fluid cinematography. The film begins and ends by using Samuel's economic answer to Spielberg's is grotesque means of producing long, anxious, tracking shots through space. "Sticky-cam" whereby the camera is mounted on a 15 foot two-by-four with two volunteers running the hell over hill and dale. This initial use of "sticky-cam" involves a moody tracking shot through the fog over a haunted looking stream, under and over hanging tree branches and logs, ultimately leading to a high-angle position following the air of "hellfire" toward the cabin where all the horror will occur. Dark, dark, dark, beginning - meaning the hole opened is a head-on collision and a near fatal fall through a decaying wooden bridge - immediately puts the audience on edge.

Once the college-age kids arrive at the cabin, various stereotypes are developed (the total extent of character development). Cheryl the quiet and easily frightened artistic type, attempts to sketch a dangling pendulum clock. As could be expected, the pendulum abruptly stops the going source (not even on the hour), and a gush of water erupts from the hole in the ceiling, which as a tree crotch with a chain and shackles mounted on top suddenly begins to lift itself up and bang several times. Seemingly terrified and withdrawing into a fetal-like state, Cheryl begins to scrawl violently a square-shaped design like the cuts through several layers of drawing paper. This square-shaped face representing demonic possession, will be a recurring image.

Soon the people are leaving each other at the dinner table ("Party down") as the trap door first open revealing a host of hairy wooden dogs (the dogs are the "before" (probably just some animal down there)). Shortly, the more "macho" of the two males, volunteers to investigate also. When he descends and minutes pass without any sound from him, Ash, the other male, armed with a lantern, climbs down the stairs to investigate accompanied by the sound of dripping water pipes. Once again the visual told camera adds to the eeriness with many long, low and moody, somersault hand-held, tracking shots. "Blood" (the name of the movie) is in the air, the name of the movie is in the air, the name of the movie is in the air. Cheryl the quiet and easily frightened artistic type, attempts to sketch a dangling pendulum clock. As could be expected, the pendulum abruptly stops the going source (not even on the hour), and a gush of water erupts from the hole in the ceiling, which as a tree crotch with a chain and shackles mounted on top suddenly begins to lift itself up and bang several times. Seemingly terrified and withdrawing into a fetal-like state, Cheryl begins to scrawl violently a square-shaped design like the cuts through several layers of drawing paper. This square-shaped face representing demonic possession, will be a recurring image.

As mentioned in the analysis of *BASKET CASE* the bond of love between human beings, the strength to be found in relationships, can be the cause and the cause of "hell" as the name of the movie is in the air, the name of the movie is in the air, the name of the movie is in the air. Cheryl the quiet and easily frightened artistic type, attempts to sketch a dangling pendulum clock. As could be expected, the pendulum abruptly stops the going source (not even on the hour), and a gush of water erupts from the hole in the ceiling, which as a tree crotch with a chain and shackles mounted on top suddenly begins to lift itself up and bang several times. Seemingly terrified and withdrawing into a fetal-like state, Cheryl begins to scrawl violently a square-shaped design like the cuts through several layers of drawing paper. This square-shaped face representing demonic possession, will be a recurring image.



Ash, the first victim of Sumerian evil released by The Book of the Dead. Here true is stand in his good buddy Scotty, seen in the THE EVIL DEAD.

In a familiar horror film cliché, Cheryl senses she is being watched by a presence outside the cabin. So she ignores her robe and goes out there to investigate alone. I know someone's out there! But from the cliché something novel develops. The entire woods themselves, every tree and every branch appear to be possessed by something evil. The over-exaggerated soundtrack is filled with magnified effects of trees falling, branches snapping, and footsteps crunching twigs. Once again undead evil takes the shape of the subjective, shaky-cam, where an ominous presence begins to stalk Cheryl by smoothly flowing through rough terrain. Soon the sound of whips cutting through the air increases as huge and small branches start to reach out for and lasso Cheryl. Branches surround her neck, tie her hands in front of her, as creeping vines grab her legs, wrinkle her thighs, and tear her clothes off. One exposed breast is modestly covered by the palm of her hand when the vines snap that hand to the soil alongside her, almost as though she were being drawn and quartered. The branches expel her bare legs as one thick branch from overhead violently snags down, rendering itself between her legs as she screams, being totally immobile. Soon all the branches become dormant, no longer possessed by evil, and Cheryl's continued struggle results in her snapping all the twigs, vines, and branches as she frees herself and runs back toward the cabin subjectively being pursued by our invisible menace. As the subjective evil rages the cabin door Cheryl - who has been yelling and crying, lurches for the set of keys lying above the door - is in mid-air at the last possible moment. "I love the woods, they're alive!" Tree tops seem about to pop, but as executed by Raimi, it becomes a horrifying violation of the human species by nature itself.

Falling another cliché, Cheryl demands that Ash drive her to town this very second. Of course the car will not start until Cheryl chafes. "It's not going to let us leave," then the headlights abruptly flash as the engine starts. However, the duo only gets through the fog-thrusted woods as far as the wooden bridge which has now completely rotted out - the kids are trapped! In tribute to CURSE OF THE DEMON (in itself a tribute to Val Lewton's horror classic), as Cheryl tries to catch up to Ash, who is left to be seen in the dense fog, she sees her way through the woods as one long branch suddenly snags into place directly in front of her.

Returning to the cabin, Cheryl frantically glares outside the window as Ash listens to more of the tape to learn that diabolism isn't the only way to destroy the demons. The others who are playing cards, note the suits of various playing cards aloud. Soon, Cheryl's voice, which is changing, growing resonant, repeats these same suits aloud. She whips her head around to reveal the extent of her possession - her face now gleam white, her features widened and distorted, her eye-balls totally white. Her body now a shell without a spirit, writhes and convulses as she is hoisted upward by forces unknown. As she floats she is embedded into the center of the tape. Why then you disturbed our sleep! One by one we will take you! Cheryl's body then suddenly drops and returns to unconsciousness. Her face now looks normal, but her head, immobilized by spectators, is decayed. She reaches for an exposed panel which she thrusts into Linda's eye, grinding the stick into her further and further. Finally, she flings human bodies across the room who all first stunned, quickly recover trying to overturn the crazed Cheryl. One of the men, using the handle of an axe, beats her down into the cellar and locks shut the trap door with chains. Although safely contained within, Cheryl, now horribly demoralized, sees off the trap a few inches - enough to free part of her arms and expose her face and to deliver frenzied wails and accented laughter.

It is not long before Shelly the dark-haired girl is the next victim of demon possession. She stands inside the lighted cabin looking outward feeling the eerie presence of invisible evil lurking about. Once again the viewer becomes the subjective force of Sumerian evil as the viewer, looking in from the outside, really forces the window where Shelly looks outward. As our presence ruins her view, she recoils in horror, the window glass shatters, and her screams reverberate throughout the cabin. In one of the moodiest and most carefully sculptured terror sequences, Scotty rushes to investigate, closely examining the broken glass, the area outside the

cabin window (definitely the viewer expects anything to attack from anywhere at anytime - we are ripe for a fright), and the dark cubbyholes behind the closed door. After pecking out the bathtub which is empty, Scotty turns as sharp red fingernails grasp his throat and tear open the right side of the face drawing blood. The hand-held camera helps to deliver the ultimate shock payoff after building up and stretching out the suspense for well over two minutes. Here we have atmosphere with a minimum of gore.

When Shelly is knocked over and falls into the fireplace catching fire, something interesting occurs relating to our "intimate relationship" theme mentioned earlier. When Scotty sees his beloved Shelly alive, he instinctively grabs her head and puts her to safety. She demagogically utters "I don't know what I would have done if I would have remained on those hot coals, burning my pretty little!" Something unusual is happening here. The women whom Scotty loves has become a Sumerian demon intent on killing him. He fights to save his life by destroying her, but as soon as he sees her in physical peril, he instinctively saves her life without concern for his own welfare. Immediately Shelly rises up still possessed by infernal fire and tries to run a swift second down his throat and back but ends up in the very same fireplace. Scotty, luckily, is able to blow his shelled neck and stab the hand which holds the sword. Utilizing ultra-gore, Shelly starts gnawing and chewing at her useless hand baring through muscles and tendons until the hand is severed with bloody snags dangling. Wilfully, this sword is rammed into Shelly's back (with the hand still attached) as while from looms at her mouth after which she vomits forth buckets of demonic pus. Her corpse lies motionless. Not surprisingly, as Scotty walks past this pile of rotting Shelly's hand grabs him. Scotty sees as red in the field of rotting Shelly as Ash. Scotty grabs the axe and immediately feels the struggling corpse to pieces. After the grisly deed is completed, each individual piece of corpse quivers and struggles to move. These pieces are quickly buried.

Justly shaken, Scotty claims he is getting the hell out of here, then he must exist allowing capacities to bypass the bridge. Ash, wildly concerned shouts that Linda is still injured and cannot be moved. Scotty coldly claims he doesn't care what happens to Linda - she is his girl friend.

Just when the viewer thinks he might have a breather, Ash goes in to check on Linda who is lying peacefully asleep. He answers her ankle investigator her ankle would, and in utter amusement watches as the small-eyed, grown spider-web-like up her entire leg. She jerks awake to a waking position while-eyed demon possessed and laughing hysterically. She is a simple grandmother in horror Ash backs out the cabin where the half-dead body of Scotty stumbles and collapses on his shoulder. Cheryl was right! It won't let us leave. We're gonna die! Linda watches this spectacle sitting cross-legged on the side steps. Her hysterical laughter prompts Ash to repeatedly watch her in the place with little effect - her laughter continues. Quickly producing a shot gun aimed directly at her head Ash momentarily perks as the body of Linda assumes its regular appearance. The garbled words now please, Ash, help me please! then, from down in the pit, the trap door for the first time closed shut, the smelter bleedings of the now human-faced Cheryl inspire, "I'm all right now. Please unlock this chain." Foolishly, Ash goes for the keys, lifts the trap door and peers down into the darkness. Suddenly a decayed hand grabs him but he escapes. The childish sing-songy chorus, both possessed women now chant, "We gonna get you!" As Ash speaks with and leads water to the miniature mouth of Scotty, Ash finally realizes that Scotty is dead - but in the movie perhaps not for long. Linda angrily slaps Ash in the arm, but he seemingly destroys her by tossing a sword into her back as she vomits forth her intestine and then lies motionless. Immediately churning her body to a work table, Ash holds a gas-driven chain saw (belonging to another horror classic once again) above her motionless corpse remembering that diabolism isn't the only way to keep the dead at rest. However, he sees before him the body of the women he loves, and most touchingly, he sees the necktie he recently gave her. He cannot mutilate the body, instead he carries it out side by foot. Then in a macabre reversal of the cat and mouse manner in which Ash pretended to be asleep when originally giving Linda her present, Cheryl, who use to be fragile and vulnerable and artistic, is now reduced to being demagogically sell, locked away under the trap door, in THE EVIL DEAD.





Top: An eerie publicity shot, used as the basis for THE EVIL DEAD's poster publicity campaign, was never utilized in the movie itself. **Bottom:** Linda, Ash's girl friend, here lies dead. Although to Tobe Hooper's classic TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE, Ash prepares to dismember the corpse, which he cannot do.

the Hellcat eyes of Linda open and watch Ash as he digs a grave. Wherever he passes to look over her body, she plays dead. Once buried, her hand thrusts upward through the soil to grab the startled Ash ripping the flesh from his arm and leg. His immediately produces a heavy wooden beam and commences to break every bone of her undead body. She only laughs refusing to stay dead. Utilizing her super-human strength, she grabs hold of the beam forcing Ash to the ground. She flings her body through the air to pounce atop him lower when Ash quickly reaches for the shovel and decapitates Linda in mid-air. Her headless body falls on top of his. Her arms clenching for his throat. Asher clambered head twitches and mawkishly faces, the body violently spews hydroclastic pumped blood directly into Ash's face as she flares inside the confines of his cabin. Linda's head continues to float.

Once inside the cabin, all hell literally breaks loose. Several corpses from the vicinity charge the barricaded fortress as Ash, near a state of utter shock, savagely forces doors and windows shut on decaying corpse hands (shades of Romero's NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD). Soon in the cellar blood freely flows from wall sockets as lit light bulbs screwed into sockets fill internally with blood and pop. A movie projector automatically turns itself on projecting images of dripping blood on the wall behind Ash who is blinded by the bright light. An old record player starts to play a 100% rpm record which is festive and jolly. Soon the record player slows down and stops. The projector blows up as blood slowly drips from the end of the lens and when Ash looks at his image in a wall mirror, extending his arm, subdued to convince himself that he is still alive. It is head peering through what has become a liquid pool of blood. As Ash withdraws his hand from the gore pool and stares downward at it, he only sees death.

Without ever letting up, the climax of the movie features Ash standing with his back against the wooden door, holding the charred red necktie he gave Linda as two ghoulies enter from the door choking Ash. At the same time Scooby, now horribly decayed, rises from the dead and today his Ash off the ground after he escapes from the first zombie. Momentarily fleeing to safety from Scooby by gouging both of his eyes into the bloody red pulp using his thumbs, Ash views the body of the dead lying near the fireplace. He wisely tries to grasp the book to throw it into the fireplace, but he is held back by his still fighting corpse of Scooby who holds him by the legs as he tries to crawl toward the book. The other ghoul picks up a hol poker from the fireplace and savagely beats Ash over his back with it. Ash's neckless, now lying on the floor in the shape of the square demon's face that Cheryl had originally been compelled to draw on her sketch pad, is grabbed

and used as a hook to snare the book which is then immediately thrown into the fire.

At this moment the soundtrack becomes quiet and the demons become stiff and motionless. The only sound that Ash hears is the sound of cracking, brittle bones and skeletons which collapse under their own weight. The next sequence features stop-motion animation involving the decaying corpses as lips turn to dust, hair and flesh crumble and fall, and noses whir. Gray animation is frequently used during this segment to depict tongues which are extended and eyes that pop. Interestingly enough one of the decaying faces assumes the horrible square countenance which has symbolized demon possession throughout the movie. The final segment of decay is the VHS/DVD-ROM-esque explosion of guts and blood as the bodies of the dead rip themselves apart. Usually when guts explode from stomachs, chests, or even legs, a horribly concerned demon hand also extends itself from the same exposed body part. Ash is literally bathed in blood. The corpses stumble and fall, skeletons crumple, and maggots scurry on the floor around this mass of decaying flesh. An ethereal cry proclaims, "Join us!"

Suddenly the sun is shining as Ash enthusiastically steps outside the cabin to look at the beautiful sunrise. However, from the other side of the cabin further out in the woods, the invisible, intangible demon has returned via "shaky-cam" that flits, swerves, and changes through the woods over dead leaves toward the cabin. Continuing throughout the cabin the subjective camera violently charges Ash who half turns around and screams. Repaid cut to black as the credits flash by amid a replay of the 1930s jolly 78 rpm record.

Absolutely relentless in its pacing is the only way to describe the intense rhythms and solemnity of THE EVIL DEAD. Smaller to our world nightmare, THE EVIL DEAD never lets up or gives us a second. Even when the viewer believes the ending epitome apocalyptic release and an end to the horrors, the demon returns to claim its final victim. Everyone dies in THE EVIL DEAD! And one must remember that the never-ending brutality does not only involve ultragore, but it involves artistically executed cinematography and well-crafted fight sequences which involve the creation of atmosphere and suspense. Seen film, only 22 years old when he made THE EVIL DEAD, was restricted by budget, resources, and acting talent, but he has managed to do something that studios with prestigious names and unlimited resources have not been able to do for a long time - scare the living hell out of the audience. I first watched THE EVIL DEAD on video tape (the evening alone, and even in the comfort of my living room, at age 33, I was terrified. That is the bottom line for any horror fan!

Unfortunately, many horror genre fans have not seen either BASKET CASE nor THE EVIL DEAD - even though both are available "uncut" for rental or outright sale at neighborhood video tape shops. Analysis Pictures (the distributor which originally released BASKET CASE in 1982) was the first on financially shaky legs and soon after went bankrupt. Analysis Pictures' horror film BASKET CASE was distributed to business throughout America. The film was only selectively screened at a few grind houses on 42nd Street presented via the ROCKY HORROR style of a midnight all-class. Another open markets the film was reportedly trimmed of some of its ultragore in order to emphasize its deranged humor. Censorship of violence alienated the film from the market it was financially marketed for - teenagers and young adults who want their gore undiluted. Therefore, because of the distribution strategy the film was commercially doomed from the start. Only within the past months has a new outlet, Rugged Films, acquired their retail distribution rights (after the film already had received selection distribution via home video cassette).

THE EVIL DEAD was also made in 1982 but not released until the spring of 1983 when it played some theaters along in New York City and received national reviews which appeared in publications such as The Village Voice and others. Its distributor New Line Cinema, wisely chose to release the film uncut thus avoiding the sure-fire "X" rating it would have been branded for excessive violence. However, many theater chains across the nation will not book uncut films, nor will many newspapers across the nation run advertising for "X" rated or unrated movies. What has frustrated THE EVIL DEAD has been edited for release on "R" rating, censoring the probable "X" rating. The home video cassette rights brought the film uncut into national release via video shops by late 1983/early 1984 when it immediately flourished. In the winter of 1984, after the home video market had long been saturated, THE EVIL DEAD had a very limited one-week run here in Baltimore. The simple truth remains that distributors do not know how to properly market excessively violent horror films to the American public, even the extreme ultragore style. Distributors are shackled by the national MPAA rating system that requires an "R" rating for marketing success. Therefore, theater's "fine cuts" often have to be edited by the studios for commercial survival. Even if films are released with an "X" rating or are left uncut by distributors, theater managers are leery of booking films which have been statistically shown will not make money. Theater managers also receive pressure from concerned groups within the community who often dictate what a theater may or may not show. The bottom line is that most genre fans will never see either of these films in movie theaters in their original uncut formats.

But once we get past having the opportunity to view both of these ultragore epics, we must deal with one other essential question - why should we bother to see such "trashy films"? For a moment let us deal specifically with THE EVIL DEAD. What merit can be gained from seeing a movie that is so pessimistic, apocalyptic, so anti-humanistic, and so offensive? Certainly an encounter with THE EVIL DEAD is not a pleasant experience, but are any nightmares a pleasant experience that one would want to cuddle up to?



Once *The Beach of the Dead* has been thrown into the raging fireplace, the demon possesses bodies of the dead instantly and decay within five minutes. As parts of the corpse explode outwardly spewing forth buckets of blood and guts, horribly conceived human hands pop out of the body parts as well.

Most definitely *THE EVIL DEAD* is an excessive game-breaker. But so was *HORROR OF DRACULA* when it showed chest-punching stinkies in vivid Technicolor, so was *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* when it depicted zombies eating the still warm internal organs of the recently dead, and so was *THE EXORCIST* when it showed a corrupted young innocent man-in-bet with a crucifix and shouting obscenities. Cinema history now looks kindly upon such "excesses" realizing that sometimes artistic expression must be offensive, over-the-top, and even crude. One only has to look to history's great literature to see examples of excessive violence and gore - the legacies of Shakespeare come immediately to mind. What the discriminating viewer must discern is whether or not the ultra-gore is being utilized as conventional product for its own ends or if it being employed as an artistic device - no matter how unpleasant - to further the plot or message of the movie? Whether or not we believe the violence of *THE EVIL DEAD* is excessive, what we really need to ask is how efficient is the film when viewed aesthetically, not piecemeal. Today's audiences are more sophisticated when it comes to accepting special visual effects and special make-up effects, so the filmmaker is forced to be even more cruel when it comes to horrifying audiences. The understated subtle psychological horror film (the best represented by films such as *CANNIBAL OF SOULS*, *THE HAUNTING*, and *DON'T LOOK NOW*) certainly still could be successful today. But as stated earlier, the use of ultra-gore is only one means of achieving the ends of frightening movie audiences. Often times, the use of ultra-gore may be the most effective means of getting artistic attention when rising up the ranks of low-budget independent movie-maker. But once the artist gains his audience's attention, the artist must effectively utilize the talent of technique to follow through and maintain the public's attention.

It is not with great grief that I have to admit that in another ten years we will be viewing horror movies which will make *BASKET CASE* and *THE EVIL DEAD* seem restrained. But since discriminating horror film buffs went through all the crap, I feel confident that a few "gore" will definitely make your presence felt. Remember, in the future, ultra-gore will only become more "futile."

Even though the ultra-gore employed in making *BASKET CASE* and *THE EVIL DEAD* has been the primary aspect that has won each of these films notoriety in the press, this is certainly not the reason why in the summer of 1984 I'm calling these two movies among the best the genre has produced in the 1980's. *BASKET CASE* blends graphic violence with related humor and touching human relationships (a brother's love and responsibility for

another brother). Never taking itself too seriously as a drama, *BASKET CASE* becomes the logical extension of what Roger Corman and Charles B. Griffith were attempting to do with such off beat films as *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS* and *BUCKET OF BLOOD* 20 years ago. Fred Herskoffler, by estimating all these influences from his past cinematic viewing, has structured something genuinely original - not for everyone's taste. Like or not, *BASKET CASE* is energetic, innovative, and involving - certainly an exemplary horror film.

Sam Raimi's *THE EVIL UNDEAD* takes many of the old horror film clichés and turns them around adding the element of surprise to create something totally familiar yet totally new. By employing innovative fluid camera work threaded to a meter relaxing rhythmic pace that hits the viewer square between the eyes (and sometimes between the legs) *THE EVIL DEAD* becomes the definitive horror film roller-coaster ride. The ideas and story are simple enough, it's the total experience that makes *THE EVIL DEAD* the successful scare-fest that it is. Perhaps Raimi may someday look upon this movie as his exercise in scene technique, his thesis statement on how to terrify movie audiences. But this is the work of an artist at the beginning of his career. The mind boggles when I think of how Sam Raimi might utilize his technique in a more sophisticated production assuming that Raimi remains faithful to his art and does not sell-out to the "Big Studio" play-it-safe doctrine.

Working within the confines of the exploitation film genre, it has become apparent that Herskoffler and Raimi are simply not making exploitative "product," but they are trying to transcend the inflexible politics of the studio system (which attempts to control all film images through financial conception to the marketing and final rating which affects a film's financial chances of survival) and make the time that is theirs crying inside themselves to be made. As Herskoffler and Raimi achieve success, we can only hope that the powers that be grant these and other young filmmakers the artistic freedom to achieve their own personal visions and grant them the power to make movies which are personal statements and are restricted only by the confines of each artist's imagination, not by studio politics or the close-minded mentality of some self-righteous celebs.

SUBMIT NOW! The majority of the articles appearing in this issue were submitted as early as January or February of last winter. This allows time for editing and the assigning of title page art. Therefore, the sooner you submit your articles the better chance that article will appear in *Mechler #34*. New writers welcome!

FORGOTTEN FACES OF FANTASTIC FILMS: BRANDON HURST

GENE ROTH

by Jim Coughlin

BRANDON HURST (1896 - 1947)

One of the reasons that performers fell into the realm of "forgotten faces" is that their major portrayals occurred in films that are now lost, or silent movies and other vintage pictures that are rarely screened anymore. This is the case with Brandon Hurst, a marvelously wicked villain of the silent era. Hurst had a wonderfully expressive countenance with devious eyes that would often gleam in anticipation of some havoc he was about to wreak. Although reduced to peering butlers and English valets in the silent era, Brandon Hurst made some evil, treacherous contributions to fantasy films in major starts like *DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE*, *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME*, and *THE MAN WHO LAUGHS*.

Brandon Hurst was born in London, on November 30, 1896. Following his education at the King's College in London, Brandon became a riding master in the 1st King's Dragoon. A growing interest in theater arts, however, caused Hurst to embark on a stage career as an actor, playwright, and producer. One of Hurst's noteworthy appearances on the London stage was his portrayal of Charley in the original production of *Charley's Aunt*. Charles Froman engaged Brandon to leave the English theater for that of the United States, where Hurst became a leading man for many of the prominent actresses of the time, including Mrs. Fiske, Aileen Bingham, and Maude Puxley. Two winners (1910) garnered Brandon favorable reviews opposite Mrs. Leslie Carter. Hurst also made an early film appearance for Pathé in *VIA WIRELESS* (1913). Although nearing fifty years of age, Hurst enlisted in the British Army in World War I and was made a captain in the Remount Service.

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE (1920), starring John Barrymore in the lead role(s), provided Brandon with his first substantial part in a fantasy film. As Sir George Carew, the father of Jekyll's alter ego (Mr. The Most Evil), Hurst served as Barrymore's foil and influence. Sir George learns Jekyll about being afraid of temptation, which he later regrets as he is killed when he discovers the Jekyll-Hyde secret.

As Li Fu Yang, Hurst returned to the stage in Earl Carroll's fantasy of ancient China, *The Lady of the Lamp* (1920). Brandon helped to organize the Playter's Assembly in New York and produced and acted in two productions with the group. *Monstrous* (1914/22), as Jean Taverlar, *The Night Owl* (1927/32), as Edward Howe.

Hurst's most famous horror role was that of Jekyll, the evil brother of Dr. Claude (Nigel de Bruin), in the classic, *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* (1923). The screenplay derived from Hugo's novel with the character of Jekyll, the wicked master of the unfortunate Quasimodo (Lon Chaney), as Hurst further embellished the part with his keen suggesting odorous intentions. This is particularly apparent in the scene where Jekyll attempts to claim Esmeralda (Patry Ruth Miller) for his own, but she states that she'd rather die than live like him. Later, as Quasimodo lights off the houses storming the cathedral, Jekyll again tries to see in the Gypsy dancer Quasimodo's beauty on his former master, killing Jekyll, but receiving a fatal knife wound in the process. Chaney certainly steals the show, but Hurst's performance has held up well over the years.

LEGALLY DEAD (1923) gave Hurst the interesting part of Dr. Geiler, who, near the film's conclusion, uses exorcism to restore the life of the wrongly-executed Milton Sills. *THE THIEF OF BAGDAD* (1924) Douglas Fairbanks extravaganzas included Hurst as Caliph. Again opposite Lon Chaney, Brandon played a clown in *HE WHO GETS THE SCARF* (1924). *THE LADY OF THE HOUSE* (1926), with Sophy as the sultan and Nicky Johnson as the tax collector had Hurst as a beggar. Of his portrayal of Keanu, Garbo's spouse, in *LOVE* (1927) *The N.Y. Times* wrote "Brandon Hurst contributes an excellent character study as Anna's husband. Hurst was seen as Uncle George in the Janet Gaynor-Charles Farrell vehicle, *7TH HEAVEN* (1927).

Another Victor Hugo novel, *THE MAN WHO LAUGHS* (1928) gave Hurst one of his masked roles of all - Barkisbardo, the jester who knows everyone's business and plays all the angles to gain the confidence of King James II (Bern de Gressel), Queen Anne (Jesse White Crowell), and Duchess Arlene (Diga Balabanova). The tale centers on Geyrplane (Conrad Veidt), whose face was masked as a child into a permanent smile because of his father's politics. Barkisbardo discovers that Geyrplane is a half-to peasant and then attempt to avenge himself against the beautiful Arlene convinces the Queen of the benefits of a wedding between Geyrplane and the Duchess. Although his efforts are thwarted, as are his wicked designs on the pure One (Mary Philbin), Barkisbardo shows up the queen with his eye, nose, and grins. Hurst manages to pull off this smiling with-

out really being guilty of mugging as it was all very much in character.

THE GREENE MUDDER CASE (1929) with William Powell as Philo Vance, had Hurst as Sproot. Brandon was Or Isaac an aged inventor who is murdered by his butler, in *THE VOICE OF THE STORM* (1929). *The N.Y. Times* claimed that Hurst in *MURDER AT MIDNIGHT* (1931) was "interesting as the somewhat Lawrence." Lawrence is the butler who suspiciously sets a clock ahead after a murder, but dies on the phone to the police before explaining himself and exposing the actual killer.

MURDERING IN THE RUE MORGUE (1932) starring Bela Lugosi as Dr. Mystro, included Hurst as the prefect of police. *WHITE ZOMBIE* (1932), again featuring Lugosi as Murder Legendre, featured Brandon as Silver, servant to Beaumont (Robert Frazier). Silver meets his demise when he is thrown into an underground river by Legendre's zombie bodyguards. Hurst's role was steadily decreasing in size in the early 1930's, as both in the following listing. *Calder's secretary in SPIRIT, BODY HOLMES* (1932) a Gilbert & Sullivan actor of *CAVALCADE* (1933), a stock order in *THE HOUSE OF NOTRE-DAME* (1934), and a stammer in *VIA VILLA* (1934).

Brandon met an early death as Corporal Ball in John Ford's *THE LOST PATROL* (1934). He was a traveling Hindu priest in *Monogram's THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY* (1934). Prominent films including murder were: *THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS* (1936), as Sgt. Tinley, *THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE* (1936), as Lord Regier, *WEE WILLIE WINKIE* (1937), as Bephy, and *STANLEY AND LIVINGSTONE* (1939), as Sir Henry Fowler.

THE BLUE BIRD (1940), Meekerick's fantasy starring Shirley Temple and Gale Sondergaard, had Brandon as a footman. Hurst had a minor bit in *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1940) as Hans. Although Brandon's part of Dr. Galster in *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1944) was only slightly more substantial, it did offer him the classic line, "The uglier vein is severed - not cut, but torn apart as though by powerful teeth." Hurst was the ghost of Chief Justice John Marshall, who with other spirits of our forefathers, later to help courthouse clerk William Holden in *THE REMARKABLE ANDROID* (1943). *THE MAN IN HALF MOON STREET* (1944) represented Hurst's last fantasy film appearance. Brandon was Simpson, the butler whose master Julian Karst (Nile Asher) discovers the secret of staying young by transferring the glands of medical students to himself.

By this time, Hurst was nearly 80 years old, but he continued to perform. Brandon was seen as Llewellyn Powell in Evelyn Williams' *THE CORN IS GREEN* (1945), starring Bette Davis. *THE PRINCESS AND THE PHANTOM* (1945) with Bob Hope had Hurst humorously on hand as Mr. Pelly. Another hope (as Crosby) vehicle, *THE ROAD TO RIO* (1947) marked Hurst's final film. Brandon Hurst died in Hollywood, California, on July 15, 1947, at the age of 51.

Brandon Hurst's film work might not be remembered by many film fans. Pictured is a lobby card from 1928's *THE MAN WHO LAUGHS* featuring Brandon Hurst as Barkisbardo, the jester, who tries to gain the Royalty's confidence.



of today, but those who have or do get a chance to observe some of his classic portrayals like *Jarvis* and *Blackbeard* with the even-expressive eyes, will surely not forget his face again.

GENE ROTH (aka EUGENE STUTENROTH) - (1903 - 1995)

Many actors who are primarily associated with the fantasy film genre have fallen victim to typecasting (e.g., Dwight Frye as a lunatic, Lionel Atwill as a mad scientist) which may have provided them with colorful roles, but, in many cases, adversely affected their careers. Although usually a villain, Gene Roth avoided the stigma of typecasting due to his unique brand of versatility which enabled him, even within horror films, to play parts ranging from heroism (A GAME OF DEATH, THE LOST PLANET, SHE DEMONS) to moonman (BROCK BRADFORD) to supernatural detective (CAPTAIN VIDEO) to heroism (THE SPIDER, ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES). On the whole, Roth was seen in many varied roles (e.g., detective, former convict, minor sea captain, assassin) of different nationalities (e.g., German, French, Russian, Swedish, English, Turkish, Spanish).

He was born Eugene Edgar Oliver Stutenroth on January 8, 1903, in South Dakota. His father, a professional gambler, deserted the Stutenroth family when Gene was only two, so his mother Anna was forced to raise Gene and his two older brothers alone. Anna Stutenroth eventually moved the family to Minneapolis where Gene graduated from West High School in 1920. Taking a job as an assistant theater manager at the Orpheum Theater in Duluth, Gene often would assume the parts and roles and live acts preceding the films. In August of 1922, Roth headed to California, landing a position at Los Angeles Motion Theatre. While working in the same, Gene landed some film extra work, making his screen debut in a Mack Sennett two-reel comedy. Roth had a bit as one of the crowd during the logging scene of *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* (1923) and appeared as a guard in *MERRY-DO-ROUND* (1923).

Following two brief failed marriages, Roth sought out his father in American Washington, which proved a disappointment. Gene did, however, acquire a useful trade learning to build pipe organs for the Estey Organ Co. of Tacoma, before becoming a fight manager to Leo Lomax. In 1926, Roth headed for New York where for four years, he built and installed pipe organs for the Aeolian Company. With the stock market crash slashing production of luxury items, Roth again became a theater manager on the Lower-East in New York and Pennsylvania. Roth won a contest sponsored by Motion Picture Herald for the best script for an exhibitor for *KING KONG* (1933). His gift money involved the use of a fly-foot, made up of Kong with an actual leg placed in an elevated box that was hidden in the actor's hand when his divorce from his third wife actress Helen Mack became final in 1934. Roth was married for the final time to Dorothy Siddie. Exhausted by his work routine and seeking a change, Roth returned to the West Coast in 1943, where his cousin got him a job on the graveyard shift at Lockheed Airport. An old acquaintance, Jack Pomeroy, now a talent agent, helped Gene secure work in motion pictures.

Based as Gene Stutenroth, his first major role was that of Nazi General Diabol in *THE STRANGE DEATH OF ADOLPH HITLER* (1943). Gene continued to use Stutenroth until 1949 when a director convinced him to do Germanism his name to Roth, which he was billed as thereafter. Other Nazi roles followed in films like *SONG OF RUSSIA* (1944), *THE HITLER GANG* (1944), and the serial *ADVENTURES OF FLYING GADGETS* (1943). Roth also became a regular in many Western features and serials, including *JESSIE JAMES RIDES AGAIN* (1947) and *CRUISE OF ZORRO* (1948).

Roth's first contact with a sound era horror film was an uncredited bit in *THE SPIDER WOMAN* (1944), which pitted Gene Sondergaard against Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes. Other uncredited appearances for Gene in fantasy-related films included *THE MASTER KEY* (1945) and *STRANGE ILLUSION* (1945). Roth was credited as one of the servants of Count Zaroff (Edgar Barrier), who hunts human prey in a GAME OF DEATH (1946), the inferior remake of *THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME* (1933).

LOST CITY OF THE JUNGLES (1946), the serial that marked Lionel Atwill's last screen appearance, had Roth as Captain Hammond. Gene also was seen in three 1947 fantasy serials: *THE BLACK WIDOW* as Weller, *JACK ARMSTRONG* as Dr. Albus, and *BROCK BRADFORD*, as Albus, the evil Lunarian (for which Roth was ludicrously fitted in a T-shirt, Bermuda shorts, and white tennis shoes). In the 15 chapter *SUPERMAN* (1948), starring Kirk Allen, Gene had the small role of Conductor Censor.

A prominent villain in a part came Roth's way in the serial *CAPTAIN VIDEO* (1951), based on the popular children's TV show. Roth was villain in the character of the Rebel Abama, whose aspirations to become King of the Universe are thwarted by Captain Video (Sudd Holder). Villainy made his demise when his own ray-cannon is turned on him. An absurd costume and poor production qualities didn't help matters, but Roth was still an effective reverse. Another antagonistic serial portrayal at this time for Roth was that of Sherd in *MYSTERY ISLAND* (1951).

In the early 1950's, Roth gravitated more and more to television, appearing in virtually every Hollywood-based serial at one time or another, from *Andy in Wagon Train*. Gene was seen in many fantasy-related TV programs, including *Space Patrol*, *Mystery Theatre*, *Science Fiction Theatre*, *The Man Called X*, *Out of Julia Vance* (a presentation of *Halloween Hall of Fame*), and eventually, *The Twilight Zone* and *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*

Roth continued to accept any work that came his way, including un-billed day-player jobs like his brief appearance as the President of the United

Mine Workers back on Earth in *RED PLANET MARS* (1952). In the 1954 serial, *THE LOST PLANET*, Gene played Fleckos, henchman to Dr. Gnod of the Planet Ego, who wants to conquer the Universe. The last of Roth's many serial roles came in *FANTASY GIRL OF THE CONGO* (1955).

ZOMBIES OF MORIA TAU (1957) had Roth as a sinister chauffeur. He was the Grand Zilly, ruler of the planet Zamek, in the Three Stooges short *CUTTER SHOT JITTERS* (1957). As the strongest-side to Nazi doctor Rudolph Anders in *SHE DEMONS* (1958), Roth watched over the mutated victims of diabolical experiments. Bert I. Gordon's *THE SPIDER* (1966) included Roth as the skeptical Sheriff Gage, who is predictably done in by the monster. Gene had a minor part as Sheriff Kyles in Roger Corman's *ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES* (1959). Another Gordon film *TORNAUTO* (1961), featured Roth as a hitch-hiker operator.

Roth played the Governor of the Annelis in George Pal's *ATLANTIS, THE LOST CONTINENT* (1961) and was the Captain of the Royal Guard in *THE THREE STOOGES MEET HERCULES* (1962). Smaller fantasy bits for Roth were that of a professor in *THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM* (1962) and a tailor in Corman's remake of *TOWER OF LONDON* (1962). *THWICE TOLD TALES* (1965), starring Vincent Price, had Gene as a co-chorus in The House of the Seven Gables segment. The year 1963 saw Roth's fourth marriage, which lasted 29 years, and in divorce, and saw Gene almost die from pernicious anemia. Roth lost over one hundred pounds from his previously hulking six-foot-two, 250 pound frame and had the highest white blood cell count of anyone who had survived that disease as of that time. Despite his recovery, Gene could not regain his lost weight and he became depressed, fearing that his image was ruined. Roth's last film role was in *YOUNG DILLINGER* (1965), but his last actual appearance was a bit in *ROSE* (1967), starring Richard Russell.

O'Hare - U.S. Treasury, David Jensen's series, included Gene's final television appearance, although Roth did shoot scenes for "The Cure" episode of the *Planet of the Apes* series which didn't survive the final cut in the last few years of his life. Roth worked part-time at the liquor counter of a Hollywood drugstore and enjoyed being recognized and reminiscing about his career. On July 19, 1978, at the age of 73, Gene Roth was killed by a hit-and-run driver while crossing a Los Angeles street, although he heroically pushed a female companion to safety last.

(With gratitude to my late friend and co-author Barry Brown, who compiled most of the facts concerning Roth's background. Jim Coughlin) Pictured is a standard publicity pose of actor Gene Roth from 1956. Roth's screen presence was defined in part by his hulking size and weight, which he later lost.



Good friend and fellow MidMer contributor Bill George has recently seen his first fan book published by Imagis, Inc. *BRITDISM IN THE FANTASY CINEMA* features Forewords by Christopher Lee, Caroline Munro, and Debbie Heres. The large-size paperback contains 128 pages printed on glossy stock, 250 photo-appears, many of them new and never before in print (a total of 35 in full-color). Many interviews with the actresses involved are included! Only \$17.45 (including shipping from Imagis, Inc., P.O. Box 9614, Pittsburgh PA 15227). We wish Bill the best of luck.



Only a few years back, James Horner was a struggling unknown writing music for student films and obscure independent features. Today, he has become a composer for the kind of major films which seemed at one time to be the sole property of John Williams and Jerry Goldsmith. It's a little embarrassing while listening to the London Symphony Orchestra perform his scores for *KRULL* or *BRAINSTORM* to remember that as recently as 1980 he was still working away at such New World quivers as *UP FROM THE DEPTHS* and *HUMANOIDS FROM THE DEEP*. It was those early assignments, however, which led to his first truly significant symphonic score, *BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS*, also for Roger Corns.

Horner himself has said that on some of his earlier assignments he was required to copy the styles of some other successful film scores. In a recent interview in *Rolling Stone's* *Cineaste* magazine, Horner stated: "I've been told sorts very exciting things where they say they want exactly that kind of score, we want that exact kind of a cue—just put it in your own language, but that's exactly what we want." It would seem that *BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS* was one of those circumstances. Although a precariously, sweepingly broad symphonic work, it must be admitted that its numerous "homages" to other film scores (and hence, lack of space for much truly original Horner material) turn the score into somewhat of an extended in-joke for film music enthusiasts. The music abounds with moments that are more than comfortably close to previous film hits. Jerry Goldsmith's *STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE*. One sequence in particular evoked *Melmon Rear Guard*—probably brought a smirk to the lips of a few astute listeners with its thematic hybridism of *STAR TREK*'s "Klingon Battle" and the "Battle On the Ice" sequence from Sergei Prokofiev's score for *ALEXANDER NEVSKY* (1938). The work as a whole hardly elicited much praise for Horner as a new genius.

Horner's own sound became much more apparent in his 1981 scores, *THE HAND, DEADLY BLESSING*, and *THE WOLFEN*. In *THE WOLFEN*, the music took on a heavier, more somber and more complex sound. With *CLASH OF BLOODS* was aided by a score which included an eerie OMEN-esque churning choir and other unsettling choral effects. *THE WOLFEN* proved a major step forward, with the score creating the appropriate atmosphere through murky orchestral passages dominated by a low rumbling of tubs or basses, and a plaintive howl-like horn melody which is similar to, if not borrowed from, Charles Ives' 1908 composition, *The Unanswered Question*.

Horner's biggest break, however, came when he was asked to score *STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN*. The producers had been impressed by Horner's *WOLFEN* music. It also is not hard to suppose that they might also have heard his music (Goldsmith's *BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS*) and recognized on getting a pseudo-Goldsmith score at a reduced fee. The resulting score was quite original, however. Horner kept in close contact with director Nicholas Meyer and producer Harve Bennett throughout the scoring to discuss exactly what kind of music they were looking for. (After six from the New World days when Corns would hear a note of the music until the premiere.) Agreeing with their advice, Horner imbued the main theme with a distinct seafaring flavor. A majestic, sweeping theme for full orchestra, it captures not only the heroism and grace of the *Enterprise*, but also the integrity of the main characters and the story's sense of bold adventure. The score also included some exceptional action music for the space battles, full of frenzied rhythms, scorching brass passages, and various percussion effects.

His new score for *STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK* is a fine companion piece to the previous score, expanding the main themes into newer, well-developed variations. The score is better suited to the film than its predecessor. Horner seems to have gotten in touch with the feelings of the characters more in the new film, and some of the score's more effective moments are as soft as the soft-edged French horn solo of Spock's theme flowing over a calm sea of hushed string and wood chords during the pre-credits sequence showing a date tape playback of Spock's death from the end of the previous film. It included there for Kirk's sadness and emptiness. In the opening sequence which immediately sets the tone for the story to follow. It is to be a story which will concentrate more on personal beliefs and responsibilities of the main characters than on intergalactic war-movie. Although the film assumes has its share of killings, and other assorted uglies, as well as the inevitable shock and zzzt of phaser blasts and light-to-death violence (which are scored appropriately). The true cost of the story is based upon Kirk's deep friendship with Spock and the overwhelming loyalty of the few major crew members who follow Kirk on his unshattering mission to return to the Genesis planet and retrieve Spock's body (even though the writers almost certain Stereotypical position, the death of the *Enterprise*, and not to mention the whole identity, possible death). After several years of the TV series and three feature films, the crew have become our old friends. A certain feeling of nostalgic emotion hovers over



James Horner's individual sound is becoming apparent by the time he scores **DEADLY BLESSING**, which featured an eerie **OMEN**-esque chanting choir.

The film: We have seen some of our friends grow older, we have mourned the death of another, hoped beyond hope for his possible return, and we have witnessed the decidedly final destruction of that ever-present, seemingly omnipotent federal voyager, the U.S.S. *Enterprise*. The score certainly reflects this film's audience intention by using themes that the viewer can also recognize and identify with. Besides the numerous transformations of the *Enterprise* theme and especially the music for Spock, **STAR TREK III** makes very good use of the original television series theme (written by Alexander Courage). It took up at several pivotal points in the film, featuring one more emotional link with the audience. Especially gratifying is the beautifully orchestrated statement during the story's final moments. The background orchestration gradually becomes fuller and richer as the main theme is gently passed from French horn to the trumpet and finally to a soulful solo English horn, before triumphantly breaking in to the exuberant end title music.

TREK proved to be a truly outstanding year for Mr. Horner, providing him with such assignments as **SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES**, **KRULL**, **TESTAMENT**, and **BRAINSTORM**. When the producers decided that George Delerue's original score for **SOMETHING WICKED** was too tame, they brought in Horner to provide something a little more bombastic. What he gave them was nothing less than one of his finest achievements. The previous film's music is one of the highlights of the score. It begins with a single bell tolling, accompanied by synthesized wind, as the basses, strings, and reeds begin a repeated swelling motif, hesitantly at first, then pouring into a continuous undercurrent of motion. Flutes and later a horn, play the requisite main theme, accented by gong rolls and constantly changing patterns in the background strings. All of the scorepieces reach their peak at a locomotive slowly and ominously approaching in the night, a train which carries the evil Pandemonium Carnival.

At the root of the score, acting subtly as a foil to searier portions of the music, is the theme for the small town of Greenwood, Illinois, in the 1830s. The cantabile, Americana sound of this music perfectly captures the "petit remembrance" feeling that is so important to many of Bradbury's stories.

An acute touch in this score is the use of a small chorus of elderly singing dissonant chords. It's a particularly chilling affect. Horner is becoming quite adept at writing interesting choral parts into his scores. In a way which never strays dissonant, he utilizes the human voice as though it were an instrument. It generally does not stand out as it would in such classical works as operas or cantatas. Its use rather as an effect is described orchestral texture. Horner's choral writing seems to improve with each new score in which it appears, and at this point it is appearing in so many of them, it is becoming somewhat of a Horner trademark. Take as another example his *Wedge of the Web* sequence in the fantasy epic **KRULL**, in which a group of female voices glide ethereally from one goosier chord to the next, miraculously depicting the strange setting - the web of a giant crystal spider.

The film also features several battle scenes using a heroic horn feature for the hero's theme interspersed amongst energetic orchestral gymnastics.

Despite **KRULL**, a shortcoming as a film, it possesses one of the hardest things for a film to capture - atmosphere. Generally the music evokes feelings for the broader aspects of the story, the excitement of the battles, the unfamiliarity of its settings, and more than adequately helps create this utterly foreign world of crystal spiders, one-eyed giants and gloomy swamps.

In **TESTAMENT**, Horner took a different approach, writing an understated score which complements the very personal nature of the film, which concentrates on one family's efforts to survive after a nuclear attack. Jane Alexander plays a mother in a small California town, a survivor who must helplessly watch her friends and most of her family die one by one of radiation sickness. It is an intensely disturbing and realistic portrayal of the deeper and hopelessness of the situation. To this already emotionally devastating audience experience is added Horner's lonely and desolate main theme, featuring a particularly unhappy melody for French horn tragically, much more unsettling than that are the tender strains of music

expressing the mother's love for her children. It touches the audience and forms an empathetic bond of love and desperation between them and the characters.

Most effective is the recurring theme for woodwinds, bells, and once again chorus (and later piano and chorus). One of the saddest, most helplessness and empty feelings one can feel is remembering things now lost forever, things which might have been inadvertently taken for granted when they were there, but as the light of belated wisdom suddenly become the most precious and important things. This idea is proven to be the most emotionally draining point of the film. Given a fairly neutral day, the audience sees what looks like old home movies. Flickering images of the character at a happy time, playing in the yard riding his first bike, or enjoying a birthday party. Over these wordless memories, the aforementioned nostalgic and wistful jolly melody-like theme for chorus is played. As the film goes on, the audience needs no longer to be shown the progressive stages of illness death and burial. The bells flickering images and the chorus is enough to cause the audience to relive the sorrow of its first child's death. In these instances, the music works with the film to create the audience/character empathy through the common denominator of irreversible loss.

With these newer films, a maturation of Horner's style becomes apparent. The musical approach is more subtle and more clever, and the orchestral writing is more detailed and full. A landmark score for Horner showcasing his ever-improving skills in these areas, and especially in his choral composition, is **BRAINSTORM**.

The plot of Douglas Trumbull's film deals with the development of a machine which can record physical and emotional sensations experienced by one individual and transfer them to anyone who plays them back. The two basic threads which run through the story are: a) the resolution of the powers and potentialities of the machine and b) the government infiltration and attempted takeover of the project. When Dr. Lilian Reynolds (Louise Fletcher), one of the scientists who developed the device suffers a fatal heart attack and merges in her last moments to record the experience of death a major part of the plot structure is set up, the attempt by her partner, Dr. Michael Bruce (Christopher Walken) to play back the tape against the orders of the government's organization.

For the scenes of Dr. Bruce gaining access to the restricted computer files, and later for his fight from the pursuing government agents, Horner provides a superb motif. Over a pulsating background of basses and/or percussion, the composer layers a variety of mixed string chords, short brass statements, and a quietly descending four-note theme. This music is beautifully non melodic and creates excellent and nerve-racking through its repetition and variation of these key musical phrases and its insistent underlying beat.

In the heartwarming heart attack sequence Horner musically immortalizes Louise Fletcher's extraordinarily rare performance into a sensationally brutal cue which begins with a powerful explosion from the lower depths of **DEPTHS**. **KRULL's** shortcoming as a film, it possesses one of the hardest things for a film to capture - atmosphere. The score creates the right world.





Michael Caine lies near death after an accident covers his right hand in **THE HAND**. Horner's score took on a heavier, more serious, more complex sound

the orchestra (xylophone, gong, basses, trombones) which climaxed with a full force of a sudden punch in the stomach. This follows a series of uncertain string phrases, rising and falling as if dazed, trying to get somewhere, but unable to, punctuated over and over again either by the orchestra itself or painful jabs from the brass. As the attack reaches its climax, the musical bludgeonings increase to full orchestral power, expressing Lullian's pain through massive fortissimo chords. Only in the last seconds of the does the tumult cease, leaving but the reverberations of a gong and a soft, searing theme played by violins, echoing Lullian's first fading heartbeat. As the day, while the machine continues recording a soft choir heard intoning a brief melody. The choir is a very important part of this score, and will be discussed in a moment.

In general, the heart attack sequence and the suspense theme are the only pieces of background music linked with action solely rooted in the real, physical world. The remainder of the score is clearly related to the powers of the machine, the courage it takes to face those powers, and the consequences of the machine's usage. Two basic varieties of music are used for this: a) a geography of harsh, orchestral sounds and phrases, full of surging brass and howling voices; and b) a more conventionally melodic style of writing for orchestra and especially for choir.

The former is used in a rather straightforward way to create the sensation of the nightmarish playback of Lullian's death; the viewer's consequent journey through a lightning depiction of Hell; and ultimately, the incomprehensible radiance of Heaven.

The latter is a bit more complex in its usage. It is tied to a key theme mentioned by the Christopher Walken character - that of a man always having to take the next step, no matter how great his fears, if he is ever to progress. A brief, chorale-like song, angelic and mysterious, is used in scenes in which someone stands at the threshold of reaching a new, possibly lightning capability of the machine. The main title music begins with this choir, inviting the audience to "take the next step" along with the characters into territories uncharted and unknown.

After this main title, the film remains unexcited during the half-hour duration of the exposition sequences which set up the basic components of the story (Lullian's heart condition, the crumbling relationship between Michael Bree and his wife Karen, the government's initiation, and the surface level capabilities of the machine). The music returns with the discovery of the deeper underlying potentialities of the device, always making use of the small choir, such as in the scene in which it is discovered that emotions can be recorded.

Possibly the finest musical sequence comes as Dr. Bree uses the device to record a tape which tries to explain his feelings toward his wife - the kind of emotions which are virtually impossible to verbally describe, or are somehow hidden behind the barriers of stubbornness or alibi. His relationship with his wife is strained. His work continually takes up more of his time yet he is annoyed by her seeking companionship elsewhere, both of them have become dominated by their work, their histories, their jealousies and have fallen out of touch with the basic emotions which led them to each other in the first place. As basses and cellos gently intone a constant pulsing



A landmark score for Horner, showcasing his ever improving skills including his innovative chord arrangements, is **RAINSTORM**. Christopher Walken is pictured standing

chords, the upper strings play a slow, descending, two chord motif. Michael Bree attempts to record the true feelings for his wife. At first he succeeds only in taping his hostile feelings, the director's arguments, the outbursts of temperament. But as he allows himself to lower his own emotional defenses, he begins to find the memories and emotions of the true love was more important than work, and "we" took precedent over "I." The hushed choir enters and hovers over Michael as he continues.

A brief interlude for harp and possibly celesta (bell piano) follows, expressing loneliness through a wandering series of notes, as Karen humbly returns upon a picture of Michael she comes across while packing. [The Graces have said their home and intend to separate.]

"I made that for you. It's a gift," Michael says as he enters and presents the tape to Karen (Natalie Wood) who asks, "What is it?" He replies simply "It's me." A lighter version of the music used for Michael's recording of the tape is played over the lonely harp motif, suggesting a ray of hope. As Karen does the head of the portable unit Michael has brought with him, her mind is filled with his memories of their love for each other, and she experiences and understands his structure as she has never been able to share. The music begins a gradual crescendo, with the strings and chorus climbing higher and higher, and leading into an unrestrained theme of joy for full orchestra and chorus as Karen relives moments of their early days together, bits of their wedding, and things she may have forgotten all about. During the music (which resembles a misanthrope in form), great surges of massed voices envelop and lift the audience into the same realm of euphoria that Karen is feeling. It is a classic example of the feeling of the music being so in tune with the thoughts of the viewer as to create an overwhelming sensation of emotion which would not have been present with either of the separate components.

When the tape runs out, the lonely theme returns momentarily, this time played by harp, triangle, and piano and brings the audience back to reality. As Michael and Karen embrace in the hope of starting over, little snippets of the strings enter, tentatively and briefly at first, then building into another crescendo which leads back into the low theme. This is played by solo piano. At this point, the theme becomes both background score depicting their renewed love, and source music for a scene which shows Michael able to play a piano by playing back a tape of Karen doing so. Soon the strings re-enter playing unrestrained sweeps of passion to accompany a short montage of Michael and Karen's rediscovered happiness.

The love theme also returns during the ending credit music, a finely crafted melange of that theme and the hovering disoriented both short. Although delivered momentarily by some subdued, dark-sounding instruments from the cello and basses, the score and film come to a quiet resolution as the choir has its last words and fades to silence.

One of the freshest and most ingenious scores in cinema's science fiction film in years (perhaps one of the finest scores for any film in years), it demonstrates how much Horner's music has matured in just a few short years. It can only be hoped that in the fast and furious schedule assignments doesn't lead to premature creative burn-out. There are those who still believe even after works such as **KRULL** and **RAINSTORM** that Horner is only an imitative shuffling shiner whose bright talent will soon fade to glow that in this writer's opinion, he is a young star still on the rise, whose extraordinary recent works are only hints of a long period of brilliance that has only just begun. For the sake of film music, please don't make a bar out of me, Mr. Horner!

REMEMBER TO WRITE! McMer contributor David McDaniel phoned to tell me that his latest installment and updating of *The Definitive Reference Guide to Contemporary Listing of Fantasy Movie Books* would be ready for publication in next year's issue #34. This reference listing of titles and publishers would take up 4-6 pages. Does our readership want to see this feature continued in our pages, or doesn't it? Write us to let us know!

midnight marquee

CINEMA REVIEW—Gary J. Svehla

***** EXCELLENT
 ***** VERY GOOD
 **** GOOD/MEDIOCRE
 ** FAIR/BLATANT
 * WORTHLESS

GREMLINS *****

GREMLINS is a movie of enigmas: the hedonistic, fun-loving Stripe almost becomes an evil, soul-thirsting demon bent on destruction. The very same charm which divides my feelings toward the movie. On the one hand GREMLINS offers such adorable sights, the art director who depicts the small town of Kingston Falls entirely on audio sound stages (the movie's line of misadventures is fun combined with horror, the confrontation between the mother and the Gremlins in the kitchen [with the maniacally funky misadventure massacre], the SNOW WHITE dealer party sing-along and the outrageous humor of the Gremlin bar sequence featuring Sammi and break-downs. Even if the Gremlins themselves sometimes become too Muppet-like for their own good. They are voiced endearing marvels of special effects wizardry.

The film's chief disappointment comes from its lack of personal identity. Director Joe Dante, the master of practical in-jokes, became the master of this style in his best film to date, THE HOWLING. To horror movie buffs recognizing that almost every character name in the production was the same of a horror film producer/director associated with atrocity movies from the past was clever. But it immediately noticed the tribute, but it never interfered with the movie's experience. But now in GREMLINS Dante is stuck to so many other classic fantasy films: WIZARD OF OZ, IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE, and SNOW WHITE. But one is constantly reminded of the fact that all those other films were done so much better and that GREMLINS lacks its own sense of unique fantasy. This lack of personality carries over to the two lead performers: Zach Galligan and Phoebe Cates, who fail to spark any sort of electricity and remain non-entities throughout the film. Only the staccato and humorous character roles turned in by Henry Axton, the delightful Dick Miller, and the often-bloated Billy Halverson give the production any life (outside of the mechanical Gremlins whose performance outshines their human counterparts - a never good sign).

But one can almost forgive these various flaws when one gets caught up in the high energy which this movie does make GREMLINS one of the most involving audience participation films in a long time. The laughs far outweigh the error, but seldom have I found myself laughing out loud so hysterically in a movie theater. Simply stated GREMLINS is a flawed movie, yet it is also one hell of a lot of fun with its strengths outweighing its flaws.

GHOSTBUSTERS ****

Humor is very personal and what makes one person laugh may leave another person bored. As I watch GHOSTBUSTERS break 100 million dollars in sales, I'm amazed. I like it. I must say and find him and the others of his funny, but GHOSTBUSTERS to me was nothing funny. The story was slow in developing and I found myself becoming a little bored near the middle. I enjoyed Sigourney Weaver's performance parodying the demon possession images created by THE EXORCIST, and during these scenes I found the humor effective. I loved the state-of-the-art special effects suggested by Richard Edlund. I'm sorry of industrial light and magic. And I enjoyed the goofy play-acting who almost set by Bill Murray. The film's first 20 minutes were for me the high point of the production simply because it's first segment featured the pinnacle of special effects technology. I kept thinking how incredibly great this entire sequence would be if it were properly utilized in a decent horror movie, not as the icing on the cake of a mediocre comedy. GHOSTBUSTERS becomes the most extreme sample of special effects technology creating the substance of the movie, but why can't the public see beyond this transient magic and light show and see that the patron himself has been "served"?

STAR TREK II: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK *****

I was previously bored and disappointed by STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE, but I am the high priest of STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN. Very fortunately STAR TREK II is a continuation of the style created by WRATH OF KHAN, however, the feature film directorial debut of Leonard Nimoy is not up to the standards set by this emotional manipulator Nicholas Meyer with WRATH OF KHAN. Think back to the ending of WRATH OF KHAN when Spock dies. Didn't a tear come to your eye? Now, think back to the destruction of the Enterprise or the death of Kirk's son David in SEARCH FOR SPOCK - did the viewer feel even a portion of the emotion generated by director Meyer in the last feature? Probably not and this is not a weakness in the script, but it is a weakness in the direction of Nimoy. For this specific reason SEARCH FOR SPOCK is a big light years ahead of the first feature film, but it sits slightly below the second.

What does admirably succeed in SEARCH FOR SPOCK is the character integrity between members of the crew, especially Kirk, McCoy and Scotty. And this only surfaces Leonard Nimoy's chief strength - he does understand the subtleties and complexities inherent in each Star Trek character. Thus, SEARCH FOR SPOCK becomes most like the original TV series with less emphasis being placed on special effects and more emphasis being placed upon character. This creates a movie more appealing to those beyond of dedicated fans who flock to conventions, appealing less to the fan who enjoys lots of action and special effects in his science fiction. As a whole, this third feature film entry is not as profound, not as stylish, or not as emotionally gripping as WRATH OF KHAN, but it is a none-the-less excellent entertainment true to the spirit of the Star Trek legacy.

THE NEVERENDING STORY ****

Economic times in the Eighties are not the best to go just like during the post-Depression period of the Thirties, people are going to the movies to forget about their problems at home if they can afford to own one, that is. Certainly the fantasy films of Ray Harryhausen have a distinctive look as do the fantasy films of George Lucas or Jim Henson. Nowhere in Cinema comes THE NEVERENDING STORY, a movie whose visual style is unique and is delightfully different from the styles of the other masters named. Director Wolfgang PETERSON's ability to create such a distinctive fantasy world is this movie's strongest asset. The giant, mechanical creatures with their soft eyes project warmth and realism. Even the background's allegorical and becomes meaningful for adults as well as children, focusing on the problem of maintaining imagination in one's life in order to survive and avoid THE Nothing.

However, just like DARK CRYSTAL, before it, the wonderful fantasy land created by PETERSON and his crew of technicians can't make up for what, unfortunately, a very dull plot where very little happens. The production attempts to be so "child-proof" that the basic conflict between good and evil becomes so simplistic and utterly undramatic simply because no violence is to be observed. Even in the Ray Harryhausen's head episode our hero would fight skeletons. Look the eye of the good Cyclops, and also with white, bloody words. THE NEVERENDING STORY is too sterile for its own good. Doesn't anyone read the story told written by the Brothers Grimm anymore?

THE EVIL DEAD *****

Herein, down this year's winner of the Mid-Midwestern Award for best movie. Operating independently against a very limited budget, youthful writer/director Sam Raimi has conceived a living nightmare that turns our cherished loved ones into demon possessed zombies that can only be killed through dismemberment. Raimi utilizes excessive gore and violence as it has never been employed on the screen thus far, yet THE EVIL DEAD also generates slowly mounted mood/suspense sequences of the classic horror film variety relying upon exceptional camera work that only adds to the demon itself feel more invaded or even kills young innocents. Never has a horror film excited such strong reactions in critical circles. The truth is THE EVIL DEAD may be too intense for many adults with its unrelenting visceral punch to the groin. Certainly THE EVIL DEAD is more a pleasant experience, but it may very well be the horror standard of the 1980's. Only time will tell!

Always, in his quest to save Fatales, (see the Sphinxes, creatures that destroy them with self-doubt, is PETERSON's THE NEVERENDING STORY.



INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM *****

TEMPLE OF DOOM, like GREMLINS, is fluff, but unlike GREMLINS, it is consistently effective fluff. The adventures and stunts to be found here are never new, but instead they are embellishments and extensions of stunts to be found in serials from bygone eras. TEMPLE OF DOOM contains even less character development than RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK, but Lucas and Spielberg showed us all we needed to know about Indy in the first feature - certainly Indy Jones is a man of action, not character.

Even the film's plot is minimal, strung to the bare bones so the movie-makers do not have to waste time filling in narrative detail. TEMPLE OF DOOM is non-stop action, dialogue and resolving, ensuring itself an inescapable visceral grandeur utilizing an ample budget that allows Lucas and Spielberg to produce the delicious serial adventure. This is superficial, surface cinema at its best. TEMPLE OF DOOM does not try to do too many things, but the cinema's lack of endeavors to locate it does do with excellence and style all its own. Unfortunately, the world is full of many such-pussies who demand that every movie contain substance and deep ideas. We can only feel sorry for those among us who have lost the ability to have fun, which is exactly the state of perfection that TEMPLE OF DOOM accomplishes!

THE LAST STARFIGHTER ***

Nick Castle, a protégé of John Carpenter (a derivative filmmaker being heavily influenced by TRAVELER Steven Spielberg's CLOSE ENCOUNTERS which becomes rapidly apparent when viewing THE LAST STARFIGHTER. THE LAST STARFIGHTER tries to be poignant and uplifting by again appealing to that young boy that exists in all of us, dealing with painful emotions and desires using the setting of a trailer park that could have come out of a Frank Capra movie. Nick Castle's own is obscurely in the right place, but can't anybody in the Eighties make an original movie anymore? The science fiction film genre is becoming as stale and unresponsive as the horror film genre.

What makes THE LAST STARFIGHTER rise above the mediocrity is its Spielberg-esque ending showing the smiling faces of the townspeople beamed in satellite and relayed live as the young hero returns to Earth to ask his girl friend to accompany him to the stars. After the rocket lands and the startled expressions of quiet older neighbors a pubescent voice intones: "Mom, I'm home!" Derivative certainly, but there is enough honest emotion and cleverness inherent in this sequence to make it reasonable and a true delight. The computer generated special effects are good, but they pale alongside the superior work of RLM and Douglas Trumbull.

CUJO **

America's wake up! Stephen King, perhaps the best-selling American author of the 70's and 80's, is little more than a modern pulp writer of popular fiction. His stories probably work better as novels or short stories than as scripts translated to the screen. The truth is, there is little original in King's ideas. He has artistically borrowed from other literary sources and other cinematic sources. Granted his early fiction through THE STAND was generally excellent, but for the last several years King has been riding his luck to the bank by churning out profitless, not art. Cujo, one of King's recent products, translates to the screen as well as could be expected - mediocre.

The first half of the movie is pure hellium and soap-opera melodrama. When the rebo dog starts terrorizing people and holds a night race on Oak Mallard and her sick child in the car, all the fanfare, the movie finally and all too late, takes life-gear. The most interesting aspect of the production for me was watching this poor innocent Saint Bernard dog having to bear pounds of greasy, runny, latex makeup for his starring performance. I wonder what the dog was thinking when the makeup was applied and then suddenly he had to roll out under hot leg lighting. Granted, the film's final half-hour is suspenseful and gripping, but the rest of the production only serves as the lease for one long extended shock sequence. At least the child is allowed to live at the film's end.

Linda Hamilton is kidnapped and tied to a cross-arms an offering to "The Who Walks Behind the Rows" - from CHILDREN OF THE CORN.



CHRISTINE ***

After John Carpenter's brilliant THE THING, CHRISTINE, another translation of a Stephen King novel, comes off as Carpenter's weakest film, along with ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK. CHRISTINE is a much better film than CUJO, but CHRISTINE strikes me as an inferior version of CARPENTER's classic, lean horror picture. The movie has fun showing the danted car rebuild itself and pursue victims down dark alleys but the latter has been done before in such films as DUEL, and THE CAR. Carpenter needed to vindicate himself after the commercial failure of THE THING by turning CHRISTINE into a money-maker. Now that it has been pushed and paid his dues, let us hope that Carpenter gets the freedom to buck to again do the caliber of film he is capable of making instead of this assembly-line, academic release.

CHILDREN OF THE CORN **

CARPENTER is one of the best screen translators of a Stephen King novel and part of the reason for its cinematic success is the fact that Brian DePalma initially changed/wrote the story. Today, filmmakers run the word of King as though it were written by God - something to be feared. The various rise that filmmakers are making feature films from King's short stories, the resulting movie, in this case CHILDREN OF THE CORN, seems as though it would make a tight half-hour TV pilot, but unfortunately it has been padded out to 90 minutes! The bulk of the movie features people silently walking through deserted corn fields, deserted rural streets and deserted houses. The film director may claim to be generating suspense. At times, such is true. But when the suspense is allowed to stretch out beyond the point of tension or advancing the plot, the movie is then in trouble.

CHILDREN OF THE CORN does open with an unexpectedly violent massacre at a small-town lunchroom where a Satanic children butcher almost everyone in the restaurant. There is a second hunting sequence whereby a body that has been hit by a car and has died alongside the road near the corn fields suddenly jumps up and with horrifying surprise. The film's climax, at its star and end of the spectacle, is perhaps simply because the producers did not have the budget to properly animate the Lovecraftian monster which is ridiculously shown at the movies and CHILDREN OF THE CORN has several minutes of material more than an hour of film.

FIRESTARTER ****

Many of Stephen King's fans consider the novel Firestarter to be the finest of the Inferior King works. Being more than a passing resemblance to his earlier novel Carrie. However, as cinema, FIRESTARTER happens to be a superb fantasy adventure due primarily to the sensitive and in-depth characterizations of the featured players. David Keith, Drew Barrymore and George C. Scott. It is especially Scott's crafted performance that is spiritually corrupted government official who is the movie's life. It is the heart of a lesser talent that has put this one-eyed piece of human film would make go over the top. And while Scott's interpretation is anything but subtle, it is so very effective. Drew Barrymore portrays the vibrant college she was in ET. It is growing into quite an effective actress.

The special effects consisting of Barrymore's combustibility and mad propelled fire-balls are quite spectacular but never overshadow the human aspect of the dramatic work. First and foremost, FIRESTARTER is a movie about forgiveness, isolation, and loving with a power which is not yet fully understood nor fully understood. This is gripping suspense cinema at its best.

THE DEAD ZONE *****

Without a doubt, even surpassing the excellent FIRESTARTER, THE DEAD ZONE, along with CARRIE, happens to be the best movie made from a Stephen King novel. Director David Cronenberg has at last realized the commercial success that failed to materialize when last year's VIDEO-DROME played a few of America's theaters for one week and then disappeared. While Cronenberg had less creative license when it came to making THE DEAD ZONE, and when it comes to the director's personal philosophies and idiosyncratic cinematic style (this is Cronenberg's first genre feature film where he has not written the script) THE DEAD ZONE ultimately becomes totally satisfying and reflects a new side of Cronenberg's creativity. Think of Cronenberg as the Picasso style artist painting something completely abstract and undefined - reflecting the world through his art as he sees it. Now imagine this: De Lauro and Debra Hill are the people who go up to this art and say: "Wow, that's great, would you - but can you paint a farm house during the spring with a little boy running through the pictures?" With THE DEAD ZONE Cronenberg is not so much compromising his talents as stretching them into new venues of expression (I'll bet even now who least his creative eccentricities but some would call this maintaining creative discipline).

What Cronenberg has forsaken by way of personal and creative freedoms, he has more than gained in this artist's switch-off by way of the biggest budget he ever had to operate with and the most gifted and skilled set of professionals he ever had the opportunity to work with in a feature film: in fact, Christopher Walken as the mad psychotic character turns in his best characterization since THE DEER HUNTER and a few others even.

thought it might have been of Academy Award nomination caliber. But the tale remains just Makina's sensitive in-depth portrayal of this tortured human being makes one wonder how much more satisfying Cronenberg's SCANNERS might have been if Makina had assayed this title role.

It is surprising that many people who hailed Cronenberg's four-decade prefabricated such as *THE BROOD*, *THEY CAME FROM WITHIN*, and *VIDEO DROME* simply love *THE DEAD ZONE*. Although *THE DEAD ZONE* is definitely an example of the director's wings being clipped, this movie is an emotionally and thought-provokingly powerful horror drama that allows the viewer to feel the pain of being "gifted" and doomed and morally committed to specific ideals, all of the same time.

THE KEEP ***

Many people considered *THE KEEP* to be the winner of this year's *THE HUNTER* award, being superficially beautiful to look at, but finally meaningless fluff once we penetrate the surface. I merely disagree. *THE KEEP* does indeed have a tendency to be over-blown and does take itself a little too seriously, but I found the movie a blend of the cinematic and seductive power of evil to be the stuff of what classic horror movies are made of. The caliber of haunting is almost consistently excellent, with the exception of star Scott Glenn's unrefined characterization of the hard/evil/evil who ultimately destroys Maxwell Glavin. The fault here is not Glenn's for his script has been weak in defining the essence of Glavin's role, and this alone becomes the major reason why *THE KEEP* does not warrant five stars.

Perhaps the special effects at times are a little less quality for a dark, apocalyptic horror film (part of this problem probably lies with the sudden death of special effects supervisor Wally Pfister before he had time to complete his work) but the atmosphere, art direction, cinematography are all well above the usual standards for horror productions. The movie itself is slow-moving because the plot becomes an allegorical quest of a redemption after succumbing to the forces of evil (the fact that all the characters are either Nazis or Jews fits right into the design) - in other words, it is a mood piece and a quick pace would prove to be counter-productive. Likewise, the director of the Glavin-damned is very slow in materializing at first it exists as a translucent, disembodied glowing brain and eyes in thick clouds of smoke. Finally, when the demon assumes a more tangible form, it becomes a Glavin-like gent of supernatural strength.

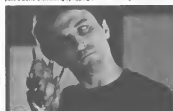
Overall, *THE KEEP* is not everyone's cup of tea, but if horror movies such as *Melro Bean's SLACK SUNDAY* appeal to you, why not movie becomes the premiere mode of artistic expression, then *THE KEEP* will be a movie you will long cherish.

DREAMSCAPE ***

A film very much inspired by David Truitt's *BRAINSTORM*, *DREAMSCAPE* succeeds where *BRAINSTORM* failed by nature of its more fully realized, innovative plot. Instead of dealing with a machine that can record human emotion and later be played back, we have a machine that allows one person to enter the dreams of another person. This person can simply act as observer and not interfere, or this person can physically intervene to attempt to solve or cure the nightmare, or as an more diabolical note, can add to the horrors of the nightmare ultimately leading to the death of the person who is dreaming. A very interesting premise, and the movie's plot generally lives up to that premise and delivers the goods with interesting performances, level but not overdone special effects sequences, and effectively directed tension and suspense.

The climax of the film, dealing with the enemy's attempt to murder the President of the U.S. via his dreams, leads to a classic conflict between the hero and villain who fight to the death in the President's nightmare. Interestingly enough, the President's recurring nightmare involves riding a roller coaster through Washington D.C. which has been destroyed by a nuclear explosion. The other weaknesses of this art direction is most effective in showcasing the dream-world which is inhabited by the corpses of the dead who return zombie-like to punish the living. Most effective

David Patrick Kelly, once again cast as a villain in *DREAMSCAPE*, here pulls a David Cronenberg by flipping out as a self-seeking human heart.



THRILLER ****

John Landis and Michael Jackson have produced the horror film oddity of the decade: the world's first horror movie musical short. Indeed, *THRILLER* is one cliché piled upon another, but the film's artistic power develops from at first establishing well-worn traditions and then speaking them by adding delectable artistic flourishes - such as the high point of the production, Michael Jackson and his troupe of zombies performing the graveyard dance. The corpses re-emerge coming to life, shaking their hair and suddenly start to dance in perfect synchronization in what has been one of the best choreographed production numbers in many years. Here the Hollywood musical and the horror film seem to be a natural together. Besides the artistry inherent in the choreographed dance numbers, we have the equally striking contributions of Rick Baker and his team of make-up technicians who deliver some of the greatest decomposed ghoul make-up ever. Be sure to notice the cameo appearance of Forrest J. Ackerman wearing glasses and leisure suit and smushing on pop-corn in the movie theater in the now behind Michael Jackson.

(Editor's Remarks continued from Page 3.)

Less preferable. But only six weeks later I am laughing about all this. Unfortunately, it might take Sue about 20 years to reach the same state of mind. We are very happy though, and that's the main thing!

Last August was a special time for me. A few days before the World Science Fiction Convention was to be held in Baltimore, I received a very special guest for the day: Forrest J. Ackerman, Mr. Monster himself. After corresponding with Fory for 20 years and speaking briefly to him at various conventions, I always wanted to invite him over to see my vast post-war lobby collection, take him out to dinner, and chat. It was a beautiful day and a wonderful time spent by all. Approaching 70 years of age, Fory is an institution, always spinning personal reminiscences of events with state such as Lugosi and Karloff. And not to tarnish the image of a legend, but Fory can be pleasantly and charmingly roiled during dinner conversations. Today, with great joy, I can make the following announcement: Forrest Ackerman is returning to the world of magazine publication with the birth of *Famous Monsters as Monsterland*. Due to the horrendous shanty after this issue of *MidMar* hits the newsstands, Ackerman hopes to produce a more mature, serious journal of the world of horror/science fiction. To subscribe for nine issues, send \$35.25 to New Media Publishing, Inc. 1585 E. Fowler Avenue, Tampa, FL 33612. I have to admit, *MidMar* was gunning for the record set by *Famous Monsters* of being the longest running horror magazine ever published, but we would rather have Fory back where he belongs as the master of the monster than leave him behind in the past.

Lastly, if any of our readers have not read (or bought) their video copy of *NIGHT BEAST* (Paragon Video), also immediately *NIGHT BEAST* is certainly not the pinnacle of state-of-the-art special effects, acting, or editing, but it is a pleasant low-budget production produced and directed here in Baltimore by a veteran of two other feature films, Don Dobler (*THE ALIEN FACTOR* and *FRIEND*), a dedicated and highly-driven filmmaker. About five-third through the movie, after we learned of the death of friend George Sluiter, who plays the *Night Beast* away employing electrical apparatus in the cellar, two good men drive up in a car called Chevy Monza, open the trunk, and carry out the corpse of the beautiful Monica Naff, the severely murdered girl friend of the hero. One has to look closely at these two men. One man states, "We were searching the houses. Doc and we found her like this. This man is my father. Richard. The managing editor of *MidMar*. The other younger fellow who quickly exits the car while muttering "Doo!" is yours truly. I was supposed to IM Beckman's dead body from my hatch, but my father, always the trooper, literally forces me out of the way as he alone holds the delicate body. At least I got to play part of one leg and a shoulder. But in Don Dobler's next production perhaps my cameo will be expanded!

As in 1983/1984 has not been a very good year for the horror movie scene, but 1985 has been a very good year for the horror movie scene. (video must arrive in corner video stores before they see theatrical distribution), and more and more of the big-budget genre productions are becoming blander and blander. I feel to understand why daring, imaginative films such as *VIDEO DROME* bomb at the box office, wait six months later they become outrageous profitable success when released on home video cassette. Expect to see more and more of the exploitation film like released directly to cable or video cassette by-passing theaters altogether. And what's the interest of audiences in movie theaters? They are looking for a Movie and more often just as a feature is beginning a small group of people, frequently middle-aged or older, sit directly alongside Sue and me or directly in back of us. And then the conversation begins. Now in this scene, or "I think this means that" or "finally I've read that" - Sue has a theory that movie theater audiences today are so used to watching feature films at home either on Cable TV or on video cassettes that they long for this "living room equivalent" to the public movie theaters. On one occasion our movie experience was ruined by chattering, rude people. Something kept all of us to consider. Remember to write and let us know what you liked or didn't like about this issue (within the last page we received fewer letters than ever before). Expect *MidMar* #34 the same time (Halloween) next year. Thanks for your support!

Gary J. Suckla

midnight marguerite

BOOK REVIEW—Gary J. Svehla

SCIENCE FICTION HORROR & FANTASY FILM AND TELEVISION CREDITS, VOL. 1 and 2 by Hans M. Lentz, 16, 1274 pages, digest-size, cloth, McFarland & Company, Inc., Box 511, Jefferson, NC 28643, \$72.20 (including shipping).

This two-volume set is the ultimate, indispensable reference work for all lovers of the horror/science fiction/fantasy film genre. Volume 1 is divided into "Actors and Actress" (where else could you find the complete horror/science fiction filmography of Baltimore actor George Stover interspersed between the more recognizable names of Milburn Stone and Glenn Ford?) The point here is that Lentz has left no stone unturned, not even the pebbles and "Directors, Producers, Screenwriters, Artists, etc." What a treat it is for a genre buff or writer to look up the name of director John Bruno and not only get all his fantasy film titles, but also get the individual names and premier show dates for individual episodes of his genre television work.

Volume 2 primarily contains a "Film Index" that lists the title, director, and complete cast list of every horror/science fiction/fantasy film ever made (with some omissions). Not wanting to repeat the entire waters revealed by Walt Lee or Don Willis, Lentz's credits are photographically limited to cast lists (in case that Lee and Willis did not delve into with as much depth). But the most impressive aspect of the second volume is the "Television Index" that lists the individual episode title and premier air date for the complete run of *The Twilight Zone*, *Outer Limits*, *Thriller*, *One Step Beyond*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents/Hour*, etc., as well as one-shot TV productions and individual episodes of non-genre series that contain horror to genre lovers. In this aspect Lentz really shines and provides an invaluable service.

In his 1274 page text (no photos, no art), numerous small errors exist. However, Lentz is to be commended for the excellence in cataloging and cross-indexing this constantly expanding mass of information which amounts to a labor of love. Every genre buff should have a copy in his library!

THE AMAZING HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS AND HIS WORLD OF EXPLOITATION FILMS by Daniel Krogh with John McCarty, 167 pages, full-size, paper, FantaCo Enterprises Inc., 21 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12210, \$14.95.

Since the birth of the Splatter movie in the late 1970s, much interest has been generated about the career of the Godfather of Gore: Herschell Gordon Lewis. The initial creator of what has been the "Gore" movie in 1962 when he directed the infamous *BLOOD FEAST*. Lewis is the filmmaker responsible for such blood-soaked treats as 2006 MANIACS, *COLOR ME BLOOD RED*, *THE GORE-GORE GIRLS*, and *GRUESOME TWOSOME*, among many others. Lewis also directed other audio and non-gore exploitation film fare which this book investigates in great depth.

The fact remains that whether you love his work or hate it, that Lewis has had a great effect on the direction that horror movies took in the exploitation States, and probably the current wave of ultra-gore horror cinema can be traced back to Lewis' early Florida produced productions.

This book, with its sleeky black-and-white covers and chiseled interior layout, faithfully captures the spirit that is Herschell G. Lewis. The book is over-stuffed with classic, rare newspaper ads of his lurid productions, jam-packed with photos (some even in color) that illustrate Lewis' variety of explicit violence. Besides having a complete filmography with complete credits, the writers have interviewed Lewis himself who is finally revealed as a modest filmmaker who realized exactly what he was creating. He offers no excuses, nor does he claim his films are great art. A former college English professor and the author of many books about advertising, Lewis is revealed to be an intelligent entrepreneur who knew how to make a buck—ell with a sense of humor. Whether or not you feel the time of Herschell Lewis deserve credit or not, the volume is essential because so little has been written about the man himself or his time. And most certainly Lewis' influence on the state of the horror film is most definitely profound and makes enjoyable reading.

THE GREAT CARTOON DIRECTORS by Jeff Lenburg, 147 pages, digest-size, cloth, McFarland & Company, Inc., Box 511, Jefferson NC 28643, \$18.45 (including shipping).

When people speak of the great fantasy films of all time, movie buffs seldom mention the great cartoons produced primarily by Warner Brothers (1930s) to Fox. Merle Meliods during their artistic peak during the 1940's and 1950's. This comprehensive book spotlights cartoon directing geniuses such as Fritz Freleng, Ub Iwerks, Chuck Jones, Hanna and Barbera, Bob Clampett, Tex Avery, Walter Lantz, and Dave Fleischer, the names most responsible for producing classic cartoon animation in movie shorts less than ten minutes in length.

Besides featuring chapter biographies stressing the specific classic characters that each of the directors above created, the book offers critical

analysis of an individual body of work or, at times, specific cartoons. A complete filmography of cartoons made by individual directors is also included. A glossy-photos center section rounds out this tasty volume. If you are ignorant of the sub-genre or wish to learn more about this often ignored area of the fantasy film, this book is a must. Even if you are knowledgeable about cartoons, this volume is very thorough and goes into detail about the individual styles of the directors themselves and describes how the style shaped the cartoon characters they came to work with. A joy to read!

SPLATTER MOVIES by John McCarty, 157 pages, full-size, paper, FantaCo Enterprises Inc., 21 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12210, \$12.95 (for the new edition).

Unlike many of the horror film books which have been released in the last few years which are heavy on photos and short on text, *Splatter Movies*, a book I was expecting to be shallow, turns out to be a delight. The book itself is printed on expensive glossy paper and does feature many photos as complement to the text, but the text itself definitely shows an expansion of ideas and fresh interpretations about the pros and cons of splatter cinema.

Chapters highlight artists such as directors Herschell G. Lewis, George Romero, and David Cronenberg. But the volume also features insight into makeup effects ace Tom Savini, the Hammer Horror, as well as the roots of splatter to be found in the French "Grand Guignol" theater and in early silent movies.

McCarty finally tries to deal with the controversy which splatter cinema has created, and in his own way, attempts to defend these modern horror films. *Splatter Movies* is well documented and is obviously written by a person who knows what he is writing about. The book makes very interesting reading. Note: A new updated 2nd edition (featuring a color section) of this book is now available from the publisher.

Tom Savini, unlike Houdini, is a teacher who tells all - and shows it!

a learn-by-example guide to

THE ART & TECHNIQUE OF SPECIAL MAKE-UP EFFECTS

BIZARRO!

TOM SAVINI

introduction by STEPHEN KING
photos by George Romero

THE CREATURE FEATURES MOVIE GUIDE by John Stanley, 206 pages, digest-size paper, PanCo Enterprises Inc., 21 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12210, \$7.95

Another one of those movie rating guides from A-thru-Z whereby John Stanley, a well-known "Creature Feature" television movie host, personally reviews a great majority of the horror/science fiction films related to television. Myself, I love reading these personalized reviews and wish there was a glow stick of them. Unlike the definitive masterpiece of this style, *Keep Watching the Trains!* Stanley's reviews are too brief and actually reveal little that is relevant. Most horror movie fans will read the mini-reviews and agree/disagree - which is fine. However, no one will come away from reading this book feeling they have learned something or gained new insight into any of the movies mentioned. But this was not Stanley's purpose in writing the book, at least he says so. The book is light but it is a pleasant reading - no more, no less. Note: An expanded, updated volume of this book has just been released by the publisher.

VIDEO SCREAMS (1985 EDITION) by John McCarty, 293 pages, digest-size paper, PanCo Enterprises Inc., 21 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12210, \$7.95

Another book which attempts to review all the current horror movies which are legally available on home video cassette. Each film is listed by title and release date with the running time and major credits, followed by a short critique and a listing of the company that sells the tape. McCarty wisely admits that he has not seen all the films that are detailed and read in the volume. The movie listing section is preceded by sections detailing the care of video cassettes and cassette tapes, when to buy them, the names and addresses of video stores. The book is light but it is a pleasant reading - no more, no less. Note: An expanded, updated volume of this book has just been released by the publisher.

THE FILMS OF THE SEVENTIES by Marc Sigloff, 436 pages, digest-size cloth, McFarland & Company, Inc., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, \$31.45 (including shipping)

Why review a book which chronicles the films of the Seventies? Because the decade of the Seventies highlighted an explosion of ideas related to the horror/science fiction/satire film genre. Besides *The Films of the Seventies* is a very valuable reference source that is fun to read because, once again, Marc Sigloff lists and rates and reviews 942 films released from 1970-1979 (and fantasy, his emphasis is on "restrained" features stating that many independent and exploitation movies have been omitted) thus including scores of popular genre productions. However, the fact that Sigloff's listing is not definitive is a definite drawback and weakens the impact of Sigloff's endeavor. This is the only complaint because the author's credits and cast listings are thorough, and his critical documentation and personal comments illustrate his depth of critical thought about each movie discussed. Bantay's Sigloff's comments linger long after the book is put down. Again, this is certainly not exclusively a horror/science fiction book, but it is a book that genre fans will really enjoy and appreciate. Well worth the investment!

THE FRANKENSTEIN CATALOG by Donald F. Gut, 546 pages, digest-size cloth, McFarland & Company, Inc., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, \$31.45 (including shipping)

While many reference books can be read and enjoyed by the average movie-lover, Don Gut's massive and most impressive reference work *The Frankenstein Catalog* will appeal primarily to Frankenstein fanatics and writers/collectors, for this is most positively the definitive work on Frankenstein in print, on film, on the stage, or on record. Even though the text, being a reference work, is sometimes dry, the text is illustrated with 85 photographs, all of which are interesting and seldom seen, even the photos used from movies are extremely rare.

The chapter headings include: all the published versions of the novel, fiction based upon the original novel, Frankenstein on Stage, Frankenstein on Film, Frankenstein on Radio and Television, Frankenstein in the Comics, and Frankenstein in Record, Music, and Lyrics. All in all, Gut offers the first work on Frankenstein, and this work is once again an impressive labor of love. Of primary interest to readers of *Stalker* would be the section dealing with Frankenstein on Film, whereby Gut lists all the movie versions of Frankenstein, listing as many credits as he is able and he often gives lengthy synopses of the major works that have reached the silver screen. The chapter on film alone is 84 pages long, but many of the other chapters make interesting reading for the average horror movie fan.

More a reference work than a book that people will read from cover to cover, *The Frankenstein Catalog* is definitely a must-have for most, while pages of info and documentation is not everyone's cup of tea, there are enough sections that feature interesting reading and useful critiques that the investment is well worth the money spent. Hopefully Gut will not tackle *Dreadful*.

BIZARRIO by Tom Sevin, 136 pages, full-size paper, Harmony Books, One Park Avenue, New York, New York 10026, \$9.95

Originally published as *Grande Illusions*, *Bizarro!* containing an introduction by Stephen King and a preface by George Romero, is makeup artist Tom Sevin's personal journal detailing the full range of his work from early productions such as *DEATHDREAM* and *DERANGED* to more recent scores on *DARK OF THE MOON*, *PRIDE*, *THE 13TH*, and *CREOSHOW*. The book is exceptional and one of the very few of horror movies would love to have. Besides the large amount of photos published - many of which are in color, and most of which have never been published before (being behind-the-scenes production shots or stills of the makeup being created or applied) - the text by Sevin is fascinating. He tells of the problems involving effects makeup that he had to face in every production he worked on, and how he set out and finally solved the artistic problems. In each chapter Sevin includes a technical section where he tells "how to" create movie blood and other creative areas of interest for the budding gore-effects makeup artist. As the cover of the book states, this is a "learn-by-example guide to the art and technique of special make-up effects." But the text offers so much more than this. Unlike Houdini, Sevin is a leader who "lets us" learn. Even if the final result of his art is not to create beauty after reading, *Bizarro!* the reader will come away with the sense that Tom Sevin is indeed a very dedicated and hard-working creative artist who has been responsible for creating some of the greatest makeup seen in the modern horror movie.

BACK ISSUE DEPARTMENT: GORE CREATURES #17 #18 MIDNIGHT MARQUEE #26 #31, #33 are available at the regular price of \$3.25 per copy. We have only a few copies left of the following "out of print" issues which are available for \$10.00 per copy: **GORE CREATURES #16 #18 #20 #21 #23, #24, MIDNIGHT MARQUEE #26, #27, #29, #30**

ISSUE #36, Available next October. Order your copies now! Still only \$3.25 per copy if ordered by June 1, 1985. Copies ordered after this date may be subject to a price increase.

Artist Mark Robinson, 112 Mulholland Street, Garden City, NY 11530, phone 516-204-0136, wishes to sell his drawing from *ALTERED STATES* for \$50.00. This original pencil drawing is size 8 1/2 by 11 inches.

The Editor still has an original 1931 Universal *DRACULA* Pressbook for trade for original poster material. I am looking for Reverse 1947 Universal posters on both *FRANKENSTEIN* and *DRACULA*!

The Frankenstein Catalog, an excellent reference book by Donald F. Gut, *Stalker* will bring forth a sequel, *The Dreadful Catalog*!



GRAVE DIGGINGS . . . (letters!)

Hallo, Gary

Nelson's cover was, as always, fantastic, and the green ink is perfect. I wish that he would do some different kind of cover one of these days, something scenic rather than portrait. I love the way Alan Kozzowski takes a common off-shoot photo and adds to it, as he did with the horse head cover. Very atmospheric, very fine.

I noticed that you dedicated the issue to your parents. When I was doing FANTASIA, I used to fear that my parents would know what I was doing. I told my mom that I had lots of pen-pals, and that I was writing for fanzines. My father knew nothing about any of it, else I would have been stopped. Once he found where I was hiding my old FAMOUS MONSTERS, and got there in the fireplace, making me strike the match. All in all, I'm saying it, you were a very lucky kid.

I am very happy to see the coverage of Uwe O'Connor, as she has given me many moments of delight. She has the same attraction for me as does Maria Casparovsky. I look forward so much to their portions of the film. Coughlin's series continues to be one of the more fascinating features of MidMer, so I hope you keep running them.

William Pugmire
Seattle, Washington

Gery

Once again MIDNIGHT MARQUEE (or most typed GORE CREATURES) has appeared in my mail box nowhere. It enables me that you can profit with that type of honor system. I remember my days of being an editor (JAPANESE GIANTS) and profit (definitely wasn't in the plans. Ah, but it was fun. Never lonely when the mailman came. Typical story, I became busy with life and disappeared from fandom. Hello to Bill Meek, and all others! Sorry I disappeared so suddenly but - zzzzz. Things change.

MidMer was one of those ones that editors like me emulate. It was an example of how a fanzine should be. Twenty years! Holy cow. You and Mick Veeger.

I am a sentimental fool. I still have a chest stored in the closet filled with my favorite zines and movie material that I could never sell. My favorite poster, the one-sheet from GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS still adorns my wall.

Bubblings from the Beehive State. Anyway, I appreciate this issue very nice. MidMer's topics are always diverse and interesting - none of the typical rubbish that fills most fanzines. The Bill Nelson cover is excellent, as his work always has been. I look forward to next year and another issue.

Red Royle
Salt Lake City, Utah



Dear Gary

I think I enjoyed the Martin Kozleck article and the David Batteloff section of the film music article the most. These two persons have been sadly neglected. I believe Kozleck also worked for a time as a dialogue director, at one point featuring George Peppard to sound Garmen in TORJUN. Kozleck also appeared in the Night Gallery episode called "The Devil is not Mocked" with Francis Lederer as Credula. Keep up the fine work!

Don Frahm
San Diego, California

Dear Gary

I am a fairly new MidMer reader. In fact, I just got copies of issues 30-32 last week in a shipment from distributor Bud Plant. I just wanted to thank you for this magazine and to offer you my (belated) congratulations on your 20th anniversary.

I have long been a fan of films of the fantastic. I can still remember the good old days of WOR-TV in New York with Shock Theater and Zacherley and "Mellon Collier Movie" when you could, if so inclined, watch things like ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS twice a day for a week (which I did when I had the money). I worked in a drive-in theater for four summers, and so we able to see all sorts of great (and not so great) horror and science fiction films.

MidMer brings back something I thought the film fan publications had lost - a sense of fun. GINEFANTASTICUS and its sense of wonder is all very good and informative, but lets face it, CF has always been more than a bit stuffy. STARLOG and FANTASTIC FILMS are decent enough, if too trendy. MidMer however, and I imagine because of the once-a-year publishing schedule, takes a much broader view of the genre. And unlike many other publications, it does not seem to take either itself or horror fans too seriously.

MidMer reminds me of nothing so much as a grown up version of FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND. This is particularly true of the "Forgotten Faces" feature and similar articles. I for one am glad to find articles that present something other than the latest behind-the-scenes look at Industrial Light and Magic. Many of the genre film magazines on the stands today are too enamored of the technology of film and ignore the Uwe O'Connor and Montagu Lovas that often give these films their special quality. MidMer not only acknowledges but celebrates the human contributions to film.

George Kish
North Brunswick, New Jersey

Dear Gary

Congratulations on another fine issue of MIDNIGHT MARQUEE, and also on your upcoming marriage. I knew I had a winner when I pulled the issue out and Bill Nelson's rendering of the alien from THE THING was staring at me. It is an outstanding drawing and makes an eye-catching cover.

I enjoyed all the articles in MidMer #32, but my favorite one is your written about David Cronenberg. I have always been fascinated by his films, and your article helped me to understand (and enjoy) his films much more. I remember that I saw THE BROOD at a drive-in here and I didn't understand it. After reading your views on that movie I am hoping that I get a chance to view it again with a clearer idea of what it means.

My second favorite article is "A Monstrous Minority." It was a well researched and interesting piece.

Mike Phillips
St. Albans, West Virginia

Gery

What a beautiful package MidMer #32 is. You really went all out for your 20th anniversary issue. Nelson's cover was an excellent choice. Although THE THING was not the big hit everyone waited for, it was my favorite film of 1982. I have been reading your publication since GODZILLA CREATURES #22, which means that I've been a privileged reader for half of your 20 years. I found your editorial most interesting. (and it went how letter writing friends can just disappear. Who hasn't had this experience in fandom?)

Although I enjoyed Dean Chambers' article on Gasparization films, I've seen very few. In fact, the only ones I have seen were on the Shock Entertainment Channel. Dennis Fischer's low overview of the cinematography of Karl Sluss revealed much about this artist. His connection with LOST WOMEN is as interesting as Stanley Cooper's with THEY SAID HITLER'S BRAIN.

Thanks for your review of The Films of Christopher Lee. I picked up a copy and I was not disappointed. As usual your reviews were either right on with any opinions or exactly opposite. XTRO I really looked up to its charm and its lack of humor. MAULOUSUM I enjoyed and not just because of Bessie's exposed talents. TWILIGHT ZONE was not a favorite either as Dante's segment was by far the worst. I look forward to the next issue!

Greg Ledbetter
Richardson, Texas



